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ESSAYS

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ESSAYS

POLITICAL, HISTORICAL, AND MISCELLANEOUS

BY

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VOL. III.

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MISCELLANEOUS ESSAYS

CHATEAUBRIAND

[BLACKWOOD'S MAGAZINE, March 1832]

Chateaubriand is universally allowed by the French, of all parties, to be their first writer. His merits, however, are but little understood in this country. He is known as once a minister of Louis XVIII., and ambassador of that monarch in London; as the writer of many celebrated political pamphlets; and the victim, since the Revolution of 1830, of his noble and ill-requited devotion to the unfortunate family. Few are aware that he is, without one single exception, the most eloquent writer of the present age; that, independent of politics, he has produced many works on morals, religion, and history, destined for lasting endurance; that his writings combine the strongest love of rational freedom with the warmest inspiration of Christian devotion; that he is, as it were, the link between the feudal and the revolutionary ages—retaining from the former its generous and elevated feeling, and inhaling from the latter its acute and fearless investigation. The last pilgrim, with devout feelings, to the Holy Sepulchre, he was the first supporter of constitutional freedom in France; discarding thus from former times their bigoted fury, and from modern, their infidel spirit; blending all that was noble in the ardour of the Crusades, with all that is generous in the enthusiasm of freedom.

It is the glory of the Conservative Party throughout the world—and by this party we mean all who are desirous in

every country to uphold the religion, the institutions, and the liberties of their fathers—that the two greatest writers of the age have devoted their talents to the support of their principles. Sir Walter Scott and Chateaubriand are beyond all question, and by the consent of both nations, at the head of the literature of France and England since the Revolution; and they will both leave names at which the latest posterity will feel proud, when the multitudes who have sought to rival them on the revolutionary side are buried in the waves of forgotten time. It is no small triumph to the cause of order in these trying days, that these mighty spirits, destined to instruct and bless mankind through every succeeding age, should have proved so true to the principles of virtue; and the patriot may well rejoice that generations yet unborn, while they approach their immortal shrines, or share in the enjoyments derived from the legacies they have bequeathed to mankind, will inhale only a holy spirit, and derive from the pleasures of imagination nothing but additional inducements to the performance of duty.

Both these great men are now under an eclipse, too likely, in one at least, to terminate in earthly extinction. The first lies on the bed, if not of material, at least, it is to be feared, of intellectual death; and the second, arrested by the military despotism which he so long strove to avert from his country, has lately awaited in the solitude of a prison the fate destined for him by revolutionary violence.* But

> "Stone walls do not a prison make,
> Nor iron bars a cage;
> Minds innocent and quiet take
> That for an hermitage."

It is in such moments of gloom and depression, when the fortune of the world seems most adverse, when the ties of mortality are about to be dissolved, or the career of virtue is on the point of being terminated, that the immortal superiority of genius and virtue most strongly appear. In vain is the Scottish bard extended on the bed of sickness, and the French patriot confined to the gloom of a dungeon; their works remain to perpetuate their lasting sway over the minds of men; and while their mortal frames are sinking

* Sir Walter Scott, at this period, was on his deathbed, and Chateaubriand imprisoned by order of Louis Philippe.

beneath the sufferings of the world, their immortal souls rise into the region of spirits, to witness a triumph more glorious, an ascendency more enduring, than ever attended the arms of Cæsar or Alexander.

Though pursuing the same pure and ennobling career, though gifted with the same ardent imagination, and steeped in the same fountains of ancient lore, no two writers were ever more different than Chateaubriand and Sir Walter Scott. The great characteristic of the French author, is the impassioned and enthusiastic turn of his mind. Master of immense information, thoroughly imbued at once with the learning of classical and catholic times; gifted with a retentive memory, a poetical fancy, and a painter's eye, he brings to bear upon every subject the force of erudition, the images of poetry, the charm of varied scenery, and the eloquence of impassioned feeling. Hence his writings display a reach and variety of imagery, a depth of light and shadow, a vigour of thought, and an extent of illustration, to which there is nothing comparable in any other writer, ancient or modern, with whom we are acquainted. All that he has seen, or read, or heard, seems present to his mind, whatever he does, or wherever he is. He illustrates the genius of Christianity by the beauties of classical learning; inhales the spirit of ancient prophecy on the shores of the Jordan; dreams on the banks of the Eurotas of the solitude and gloom of the American forests; visits the Holy Sepulchre with a mind alternately excited by the devotion of a pilgrim, the curiosity of an antiquary, and the enthusiasm of a crusader; and combines in his romances, with the tender feelings of chivalrous love, the heroism of Roman virtue and the sublimity of Christian martyrdom. His writings are less a faithful portrait of any particular age or country, than an assemblage of all that is grand, and generous, and elevated in human nature. He drinks deep of inspiration at all the fountains where it has ever been poured forth to mankind, and delights us less by the accuracy of any particular picture, than by the traits of genius which he has combined from every quarter where its footsteps have trod. His style seems formed on the lofty strains of Isaiah, or the beautiful images of the Book of Job, more than all the classical or modern literature with which his mind is so amply stored. He is

admitted by all Frenchmen, of whatever party, to be the most perfect living master of their language, and to have gained for it beauties unknown to the age of Bossuet and Fenelon. Less polished in his periods, less sonorous in his diction, less melodious in his rhythm, than these illustrious writers, he is incomparably more varied, rapid, and energetic ; his ideas flow in quicker succession, his words follow in more striking antithesis ; the past, the present, and the future rise up at once before us ; and we see how strongly the stream of genius, instead of gliding down the smooth current of ordinary life, has been broken and agitated by the cataract of revolution.

With far less classical learning, fewer images derived from travelling, inferior information on many historical subjects, and a mind of a less impassioned and energetic cast, our own Sir Walter is far more deeply read in that book which is ever the same—the human heart. This is his unequalled excellence : there he stands, without a rival since the days of Shakspeare. It is to this cause that his astonishing success has been owing. We feel in his characters that it is not romance, but real life which is represented. Every word that is said, especially in the Scotch novels, is nature itself. Homer, Cervantes, Shakspeare, and Scott, alone have penetrated to the deep substratum of character, which, however disguised by the varieties of climate and government, is at bottom everywhere the same ; and thence they have found a responsive echo in every human heart. Every man who reads these admirable works, from the North Cape to Cape Horn, feels that what the characters they contain are made to say, is just what would have occurred to themselves, or what they have heard said by others as long as they lived. Nor is it only in the delineation of character, and the knowledge of human nature, that the Scottish novelist, like his great predecessors, is but for them without a rival. Powerful in the pathetic, admirable in dialogue, unmatched in description, his writings captivate the mind as much by the varied excellencies which they exhibit, as by the powerful interest which they maintain. He has carried romance out of the region of imagination and sensibility into the walks of actual life. We feel interested in his characters, not because they are ideal beings with whom we

have become acquainted for the first time when we began the book, but because they are the very persons we have lived with from our infancy. His descriptions of scenery are not luxuriant and glowing pictures of imaginary beauty, like those of Mrs Radcliffe, having no resemblance to actual nature, but faithful and graphic portraits of real scenes, drawn with the eye of a poet, but the fidelity of a consummate draughtsman. He has combined historical accuracy and romantic adventure with the interest of tragic events: we live with the heroes, and princes, and paladins of former times, as with our own contemporaries; and acquire from the splendid colouring of his pencil such a vivid conception of the manners and pomp of the feudal ages, that we confound them, in our recollections, with the scenes which we ourselves have witnessed. The splendour of their tournaments, the magnificence of their dress, the glancing of their arms; their haughty manners, daring courage, and knightly courtesy; the shock of their battle-steeds, the splintering of their lances, the conflagration of their castles, are brought before our eyes in such vivid colours, that we are at once transported to the age of Richard and Saladin, of Bruce and Marmion, of Charles the Bold and Philip Augustus. Disdaining to flatter the passions, or pander to the ambition of the populace, he has done more than any man alive to elevate their character, to fill their minds with the noble sentiments which dignify alike the cottage and the palace, to exhibit the triumph of virtue in the humblest stations over all that the world calls great, and, without ever indulging a sentiment which might turn them from the scenes of their real usefulness, to bring home to every mind the "might that slumbers in a peasant's arm." Above all, he has uniformly, in all his varied and extensive productions, shown himself true to the cause of virtue. Amidst all the innumerable combinations of character, event, and dialogue, which he has formed, he has ever proved faithful to the polar star of duty; and alone, perhaps, of the great romance writers of the world, has not left a line which on his deathbed he would wish recalled.

Of such men France and England may well be proud; shining, as they already do, through the clouds and the passions of a fleeting existence, they are destined soon to

illuminate the world with a purer lustre, and ascend to that elevated station in the higher heavens where the fixed stars shed a splendid and imperishable light. The writers whom party has elevated, the genius which vice has seduced, are destined to decline with the interests to which they were devoted, or the passions by which they were misled. The rise of new political struggles will consign to oblivion the vast talent which was engulfed in the contention ; the accession of a more virtuous age buries in the dust the fancy which was enlisted in the cause of corruption ; while these illustrious men, whose writings have struck root in the inmost recesses of the human heart, and been watered by the streams of imperishable feeling, will for ever continue to elevate and bless a grateful world.

To form a just conception of the importance of Chateaubriand's *Genius of Christianity*, we must recollect the period when it was published, the character of the works it was intended to combat, and the state of society in which it was destined to appear. For half a century before it appeared, the whole genius of France had been incessantly directed to undermine the principles of religion. The days of Pascal and Fenelon, of Saurin and Bourdaloue, of Bossuet and Massillon, had passed away ; the splendid talent of the seventeenth century was no longer arrayed in the support of virtue ; the supremacy of the church had ceased to be exerted to thunder in the ear of princes the awful truths of judgment to come. Borne away in the torrent of corruption, the church itself had yielded to the increasing vices of the age ; its hierarchy had become involved in the passions they were destined to combat ; and the cardinal's purple covered the shoulders of an associate in the midnight orgies of the Regent Orleans. Such was the audacity of vice, the recklessness of fashion, and the supineness of religion, that Madame Roland tells us, what astonished her in her youthful days was, that the heaven itself did not open to rain down upon the guilty metropolis, as on the cities of the Jordan, a tempest of consuming fire.

While such was the profligacy of power and the audacity of crime, philosophic talent lent its aid to overwhelm the remaining safeguards of religious belief. The middle and the lower orders could not, indeed, participate in the luxu-

rious vices of their wealthy superiors, but they could well be persuaded that the faith which permitted such enormities, the religion which was stained by such crimes, was a system of hypocrisy and deceit. The passion for innovation, which more than any other feature characterised that period in France, invaded the precincts of religion as well as the bulwarks of the state: the throne and the altar, the restraints of this world and the next, as is ever the case, crumbled together. For half a century, all the genius of France had been incessantly directed to overturn the sanctity of Christianity; its corruptions were represented as its very essence, its abuses as part of its necessary effects. Ridicule, ever more powerful than reason with a frivolous age, lent its aid to overturn the defenceless fabric; and for more than one generation, not one writer of note had appeared to maintain the hopeless cause. Voltaire and Diderot, d'Alembert and Raynal, Laplace and Lagrange, had lent the weight of their illustrious names, or the powers of their versatile minds, to carry on the war. The *Encyclopedie* was a vast battery of infidelity incessantly directed against Christianity; while the crowd of licentious novelists, with which the age abounded—Louvet, Crebillon, Laclos, and a host of others—insinuated the poison, mixed up with the strongest allurements to the passions, and the most voluptuous seductions to the senses.

This inundation of infidelity was soon followed by sterner days; to the unrestrained indulgence of passion succeeded the unfettered march of crime. With the destruction of all the bonds which held society together, with the removal of all the restraints on vice or guilt, the fabric of civilisation and religion was speedily dissolved. To the licentious orgies of the Regent Orleans succeeded the infernal fury of the Revolution; from the same Palais Royal from whence had sprung those fountains of courtly corruption, soon issued forth the fiery streams of democracy. Enveloped in this burning torrent, the institutions, the faith, the nobles, the throne, were destroyed; the worst instruments of the Supreme Justice, the passions and ambition of men, were suffered to work their unresisted way; and in a few years the religion of eighteen centuries was abolished, its priests slain or exiled, its Sabbath abolished, its rites proscribed,

its faith unknown. Infancy came into the world without a blessing, age left it without a hope ; marriage no longer received a benediction, sickness was left without consolation ; the village bell ceased to call the poor to their weekly day of sanctity and repose ; the village churchyard to witness the weeping train of mourners attending their rude forefathers to their last home. The grass grew in the churches of every parish in France ; the dead without a blessing were thrust into vast charnel-houses ; marriage was contracted before a civil magistrate ; and infancy, untaught to pronounce the name of God, longed only for the period when the passions and indulgences of life were to commence.

It was in these disastrous days that Chateaubriand arose, and bent the force of his lofty mind to restore the fallen but imperishable faith of his fathers. In early youth, he was at first carried away by the fashionable infidelity of his times ; and in his *Essais Historiques*, which he published in 1792 in London, while the principles of virtue and natural religion are unceasingly maintained, he seems to have doubted whether the Christian religion was not crumbling with the institutions of society, and speculated what faith was to be established on its ruins. But misfortune, that great corrector of the vices of the world, soon changed these faulty views. In the days of exile and adversity, when by the waters of Babylon he sat down and wept, he reverted to the faith and the belief of his fathers, and inhaled in the school of adversity those noble maxims of devotion and duty which have ever since regulated his conduct in life. Undaunted, though alone, he placed himself on the ruins of the Christian faith; renewed, with Herculean strength, a contest which the talents and vices of half a century had to all appearance rendered hopeless ; and, speaking to the hearts of men, now purified by suffering, and cleansed by the agonising ordeal of revolution, scattered far and wide the seeds of a rational and manly piety. Other writers have followed in the same noble career : Salvandy and Guizot have traced the beneficial effects of religion upon modern society, and drawn from the last results of revolutionary experience just and sublime conclusions as to the adaptation of Christianity to the wants of humanity ; but it is the glory of Chateaubriand

to have come forth alone the foremost in the fight; to have planted himself on the breach, when it was strewed only with the dying and dead, and, strong in the consciousness of gigantic powers, stood undismayed against a nation in arms.

To be successful in the contest, it was indispensable that the weapons of warfare should be totally changed. When the ideas of men were set adrift by revolutionary changes, when the authority of ages was set at naught, and from centuries of experience appeals were made to weeks of innovation, it was in vain to refer to the great or the wise of former ages. Perceiving at once the immense change that had taken place in the world which he addressed, Chateaubriand saw that he must alter altogether the means by which it was to be influenced. Disregarding, therefore, entirely the weight of authority, laying aside almost everything which had been advanced in support of religion by its professed disciples, he applied himself to accumulate the conclusions in its favour which arose from its internal beauty; from its beneficent effect upon society; from the changes it had wrought upon the civilisation, the happiness, and destinies of mankind; from its analogy with the sublimest tenets of natural religion; from its unceasing progress, its indefinite extension, and undecaying youth. He observed that it drew its support from such hidden recesses of the human heart, that it flourished most in periods of disaster and calamity; derived strength from the fountains of suffering, and, banished in all but form from the palaces of princes, spread its roots far and wide in the cottages of the poor. From the intensity of suffering produced by the Revolution, therefore, he conceived the hope that the feelings of religion would ultimately resume their sway; when the waters of bitterness were let loose, the consolations of devotion would again be felt to be indispensable; and the spirit of the Gospel, banished during the sunshine of corrupt prosperity, return to the repentant human heart with the tears and the storms of adversity.

Proceeding on these just and sublime principles, this great author availed himself of every engine which fancy, experience, or poetry could suggest, to sway the hearts of his readers. He knew well that he was addressing an impas-

sioned and volatile generation, upon whom reason would be thrown away, if not enforced with eloquence ; and argument lost, if not clothed in the garb of fancy. To effect his purpose, therefore, of reopening in the hearts of his readers the all but extinguished fountains of religious feeling, he summoned to his aid all that learning, or travelling, or poetry, or fancy could supply ; and scrupled not to employ his powers as a writer of romance, a historian, a descriptive traveller, and a poet, to forward the great work of Christian renovation. Of his object in doing this, he has himself given the following account :—

" There can be no doubt that the *Genius of Christianity* would have been a work entirely out of place in the age of Louis XIV. ; and the critic who observed that Massillon would never have published such a book, spoke an undoubted truth. Most certainly the author would never have thought of writing such a work if there had not existed a host of poems, romances, and books of all sorts, where Christianity was exposed to every species of derision. But since these poems, romances, and books exist, and are in every one's hands, it becomes indispensable to extricate religion from the sarcasms of impiety ; when it has been written on all sides that Christianity is '*barbarous*, *ridiculous*, *the eternal enemy of the arts and of genius ;*' it is necessary to prove that it is neither barbarous, nor ridiculous, nor the enemy of arts or of genius ; and that that which is made by the pen of ridicule to appear diminutive, ignoble, in bad taste, without either charms or tenderness, may be made to appear grand, noble, simple, impressive, and divine, in the hands of a man of religious feeling.

" If it is not permitted to defend religion on what may be called its *terrestrial side*, if no effort is to be made to prevent ridicule from attaching to its sublime institutions, there will always remain a weak and undefended quarter. There all the strokes at it will be aimed ; there you will be caught without defence ; from thence you will receive your death-wound. Is not that what has already arrived ? Was it not by ridicule and pleasantry that Voltaire succeeded in shaking the foundations of faith ? Will you attempt to answer by theological arguments, or the forms of the syllogism, licentious novels or irreligious epigrams ? Will formal disquisitions ever prevent an infidel generation from being carried away by clever verses, or deterred from the altar by the fear of ridicule ? Does not every one know that in the French nation a happy *bon-mot*, impiety clothed in a felicitous expression, a *felix culpa*, produce a greater effect than volumes of reasoning or metaphysics ? Persuade young men that an honest man can be a Christian without being a fool ; convince him that he is in error when he believes that none but capuchins and old women believe in religion, and your cause is gained : it will be time enough, to complete the victory, to present yourself armed with theological reasons ; but what you must begin with is, an inducement to read your book. What is most needed is a *popular* work on religion. Those who have hitherto written on it have too often fallen into the error of the traveller who tries to get his companion at one ascent to the summit of a rugged mountain when he can hardly crawl at its foot : you must show him at every step varied and agreeable objects ; allow him to stop to gather the flowers which are scattered along his path ; and from one resting-place to another he will at length gain the summit.

" The author has not intended this work merely for scholars, priests, or

doctors; what he wrote for was the *men of the world*, and what he aimed at chiefly were the considerations calculated to affect *their* minds. If you do not keep steadily in view that principle, if you forget for a moment the class of readers for whom the *Genius of Christianity* was intended, you will understand nothing of this work. It was intended to be read by the most incredulous man of letters, the most volatile youth of pleasure, with the same facility as the first turns over a work of impiety, or the second devours a corrupting novel. Do you intend then, exclaim the well-meaning advocates for Christianity, to render religion a matter of fashion? Would to God, I reply, that that divine religion was really in fashion, in the sense that what is fashionable indicates the prevailing opinion of the world! Individual hypocrisy, indeed, might be increased by such a change, but public morality would unquestionably be a gainer. The rich would no longer make it a point of vanity to corrupt the poor, the master to pervert the mind of his domestic, the fathers of families to pour lessons of atheism into their children: the practice of piety would lead to a belief in its truths, and with the devotion we should see revive the manners and the virtues of the best ages of the world.

"Voltaire, when he attacked Christianity, knew mankind well enough not to seek to avail himself of what is called the *opinion of the world*, and with that view he employed his talents to bring impiety into fashion. He succeeded by rendering religion ridiculous in the eyes of a frivolous generation. It is this ridicule which the author of the *Genius of Christianity* has, beyond everything, sought to efface; that was the object of his work. He may have failed in the execution, but the object surely was highly important. To consider Christianity in its relation with human society; to trace the changes which it has effected in the reason and the passions of man; to show how it has modified the genius of arts and of letters, moulded the spirit of modern nations; in a word, to unfold all the marvels which religion has wrought in the regions of poetry, morality, politics, history, and public charity, must always be esteemed a noble undertaking. As to its execution, he abandons himself, with submission, to the criticisms of those who appreciate the spirit of the design.

"Take, for example, a picture, professedly of an impious tendency, and place beside it another picture on the same subject from the *Genius of Christianity*, and I will venture to affirm that the latter picture, however feebly executed, will weaken the impression of the first; so powerful is the effect of simple truth when compared to the most brilliant sophisms. Voltaire has frequently turned the religious orders into ridicule: well, put beside one of his burlesque representations the chapter on the Missions, that where the order of the Hospitallers is depicted as succouring the travellers in the desert; or the monks relieving the sick in the hospitals, attending those dying of the plague in the lazarettos, or accompanying the criminal to the scaffold,—what irony will not be disarmed? what malicious smile will not be converted into tears? Answer the reproaches made to the worship of the Christians for their ignorance, by appealing to the immense labours of the ecclesiastics who saved from destruction the manuscripts of antiquity. Reply to the accusations of bad taste and barbarity, by referring to the works of Bossuet and Fenelon. Oppose to the caricatures of saints and of angels, the sublime effects of Christianity on the dramatic part of poetry, on eloquence, and the fine arts, and say whether the impression of ridicule will long maintain its ground! Should the author have no other success than that of having displayed before the eyes of an infidel age a long series of religious pictures without exciting disgust, he would deem his labours not useless to the cause of humanity."—Vol. iii. 263, 266.

These observations appear to us as just as they are pro-

found ; and they are the reflections not merely of a sincere Christian, but of a man practically acquainted with the state of the world. It is of the utmost importance, no doubt, that there should exist works on the Christian faith, in which the arguments of the sceptic should be combated, and to which the Christian disciple might refer with confidence for a refutation of the objections which have been urged against his religion. But great as is the merit of such productions, their beneficial effects are limited in their operation compared with those which are produced by such writings as we are considering. The hardened sceptic will never turn to a work on divinity for a solution of his paradoxes ; and men of the world can never be persuaded to enter on serious arguments even on the most momentous subject of human belief. It is the *indifference*, not the scepticism of such men, which is chiefly to be dreaded : the danger to be apprehended is not that they will say there is no God, but that they will live altogether without God in the world. It has happened but too frequently that divines, in their zeal for the progress of Christianity among such men, have augmented the very evil they intended to remove. They have addressed themselves in general to them as if they were combatants drawn out in a theological dispute ; they have urged a mass of arguments which they were unable to refute, but which were too uninteresting to be even examined ; and while they flattered themselves that they had effectually silenced their opponents' objections, those whom they addressed have silently passed by on the other side. It is, therefore, of incalculable importance that some writings should exist which should lead men *imperceptibly* into the ways of truth, which should insinuate themselves into the tastes, and blend themselves with the refinements of ordinary life, and perpetually recur to the cultivated mind with all that it admires, or loves, or venerates, in the world.

Nor let it be imagined that reflections such as these are not the appropriate theme of religious instruction—that they do not form the fit theme of Christian meditation. Whatever leads our minds habitually to the Author of the Universe ; whatever mingles the voice of nature with the revelation of the Gospel ; whatever teaches us to see, in

all the changes of the world the varied goodness of Him in whom "we live, and move, and have our being," brings us nearer to the spirit of the Saviour of mankind. But it is not only as encouraging a sincere devotion, that these reflections are favourable to Christianity; there is something, moreover, *peculiarly* allied to its spirit in such observations of external nature. When our Saviour prepared himself for his temptation, his agony, and death, he retired to the wilderness of Judæa, to inhale, we may venture to believe, a holier spirit amidst its solitary scenes, and to approach to a nearer communion with his Father, amidst the sublimest of his works. It is with similar feelings, and to worship the same Father, that the Christian is permitted to enter the temple of nature; and by the spirit of his religion, there is a language infused into the objects which she presents, unknown to the worshipper of former times. To all indeed the same objects appear—the same sun shines—the same heavens are open, but to the Christian alone it is permitted to know the author of these things; to see His spirit "move in the breeze and blossom in the spring;" and to read, in the changes which occur in the material world, the varied expression of eternal love. It is from the influence of Christianity accordingly that the key has been given to the signs of nature. It was only when the Spirit of God moved on the face of the deep, that order and beauty were seen in the world.

It is accordingly peculiarly well worthy of observation, that the *beauty of nature*, as felt in modern times, seems to have been almost unknown to the writers of antiquity. They described occasionally the scenes in which they dwelt; but, if we except Virgil, whose gentle mind seems to have anticipated, in this instance, the influence of the Gospel, never with any deep Feeling of their beauty. Then, as now, the citadel of Athens looked upon the evening sun, and her temples flamed in his setting beam; but what Athenian writer ever described the matchless glories of the scene? Then, as now, the silvery clouds of the Ægean sea rolled round her verdant isles, and sported in the azure vault of heaven; but what Grecian poet has been inspired by the sight? The Italian lakes spread their waves beneath a cloudless sky, and all that is lovely in nature was gathered

around them; yet even Eustace tells us, that a few detached lines is all that is left in regard to them by the Roman poets. The Alps themselves,

> "The palaces of nature, whose vast walls
> Have pinnacled in clouds their snowy scalps,
> And throned eternity in icy halls
> Of cold sublimity, where forms and falls
> The avalanche—the thunderbolt of snow,—"

Even these, the most glorious objects which the eye of man can behold, were regarded by the ancients with sentiments only of dismay or horror; as a barrier from hostile nations, or as the dwelling of barbarous tribes. The torch of religion had not then lightened the face of nature; they knew not the language which she spoke, nor felt that holy spirit which to the Christian gives the sublimity of these scenes.

Chateaubriand divides his great work into four parts. The first treats of the doctrinal parts of religion; the second and the third, of the relations of that religion with poetry, literature, and the arts; the fourth, of the ceremonies of public worship, and the services rendered to mankind by the clergy, regular and secular. On the mysteries of faith he commences with these fine observations:—

"There is nothing beautiful, sweet, or grand in life, but has its mystery. The sentiments which agitate us most strongly are enveloped in obscurity; modesty, virtuous love, sincere friendship, have all their secrets, with which the world must not be made acquainted. Hearts which love understand each other by a word; half of each is at all times open to the other. Innocence itself is but a holy ignorance, and the most ineffable of mysteries. Infancy is only happy because it as yet knows nothing; age miserable because it has nothing more to learn. Happily for it, when the mysteries of life are ending, those of immortality commence.

"If it is thus with the sentiments, it is assuredly not less so with the virtues; the most angelic are those which, emanating directly from the Deity, such as charity, love to withdraw themselves from all regards, as if fearful to betray their celestial origin.

"If we turn to the understanding, we shall find that the pleasures of thought also have a certain connexion with the mysterious. To what sciences do we unceasingly return? To those which always leave something still to be discovered, and fix our regards on a perspective which is never to terminate. If we wander in the desert, a sort of instinct leads us to shun the plains where the eye embraces at once the whole circumference of nature, to plunge into forests, those forests the cradle of religion, whose shades and solitudes are filled with the recollections of prodigies, where the ravens and the doves nourished the prophets and fathers of the church. If we visit a modern monument, whose origin or destination is known, it excites no attention; but if we meet on a desert isle, in the midst of the ocean, with a mutilated statue pointing to the west, with its pedestal covered with hieroglyphics, and worn by the winds, what a subject of meditation is presented

to the traveller! Everything is concealed, everything is hidden in the universe. Man himself is the greatest mystery of the whole. Whence comes the spark which we call existence, and in what obscurity is it to be extinguished? The Eternal has placed our birth and our death under the form of two veiled phantoms, at the two extremities of our career; the one produces the inconceivable gift of life, which the other is ever ready to devour.

"It is not surprising, then, considering the passion of the human mind for the mysterious, that the religions of every country should have had their impenetrable secrets. God forbid that I should compare their mysteries to those of the true faith, or the unfathomable depths of the Sovereign in the heavens, to the changing obscurities of those gods which are the work of human hands. All that I observe is, that there is no religion without mysteries, and that it is they with the *sacrifice* which everywhere constitute the essence of the worship. God is the great secret of nature: the Deity was veiled in Egypt, and the Sphynx was seated at the entrance of his temples."—Vol. i. 13, 14.

On the three great sacraments of the Church—Baptism, Confession, and the Communion—he makes the following beautiful observations:—

"Baptism, the first of the sacraments which religion confers upon man, clothes him, in the words of the Apostle, with Jesus Christ. That sacrament reveals at once the corruption in which we were born, the agonising pains which attended our birth, and the tribulations which follow us into the world; it tells us that our faults will descend upon our children, and that we are all jointly responsible—a terrible truth, which, if duly considered, would alone suffice to render the reign of virtue universal in the world.

"Behold the infant in the midst of the waters of the Jordan! The Man of the Wilderness pours the purifying stream on his head; the river of the Patriarchs, the camels on its banks, the Temple of Jerusalem, the cedars of Lebanon, seem to regard with interest the mighty spectacle. Behold in mortal life that infant near the sacred fountain; a family filled with thankfulness surround it; renounce in its name the sins of the world; bestow on it with joy the name of its grandfather, which seems thus to become immortal, in its perpetual renovation by the fruits of love from generation to generation. Even now the father is impatient to take his infant in his arms, to replace it in its mother's bosom, who listens behind the curtains to all the thrilling sounds of the sacred ceremony. The whole family surround the maternal bed; tears of joy, mingled with the transports of religion, fall from every eye; the new name of the infant, the old name of its ancestor, is repeated by every mouth, and every one mingling the recollections of the past with the joys of the present, thinks that he sees the venerable grandfather revive in the new-born which has taken his name. Such is the domestic spectacle which throughout all the Christian world the sacrament of Baptism presents; but religion, ever mingling lessons of duty with scenes of joy, shows us the son of kings clothed in purple, renouncing the grandeur of the world, at the same fountain where the child of the poor in rags abjures the pomps by which he will in all probability never be tempted.

"Confession follows baptism; and the Church, with that wisdom which it alone possesses, fixed the era of its commencement at that period when first the idea of crime can enter the infant mind—that is, at seven years of age. All men, including the philosophers, how different soever their opinions may be on other subjects, have regarded the sacrament of penitence as one of the strongest barriers against crime, and a chef-d'œuvre of wisdom. What innumerable restitutions and reparations, says Rousseau, has con-

fession caused to be made in Catholic countries! According to Voltaire, 'Confession is an admirable invention, a bridle to crime, discovered in the most remote antiquity, for confession was recognised in the celebration of all the ancient mysteries. We have adopted and sanctified that wise custom, and its effects have always been found to be admirable in inclining hearts, ulcerated by hatred, to forgiveness.'

"But for that salutary institution, the guilty would give way to despair. In what bosom would he discharge the weight of his heart? In that of a friend—Who can trust the friendship of the world? Shall he take the deserts for a confident? Alas! the deserts are ever filled to the ear of crime with those trumpets which the parricide Nero heard round the tomb of his mother. When men and nature are unpitiable, it is indeed consolatory to find a Deity inclined to pardon; but it belongs only to the Christian religion to have made twin sisters of Innocence and Repentance.

"In fine, the Communion presents instructive ceremony. It teaches morality, for we must be pure to approach it; it is the offering of the fruits of the earth to the Creator, and it recalls the sublime and touching history of the Son of Man. Blended with the recollection of Easter, and of the first covenant of God with man, the origin of the communion is lost in the obscurity of an infant world; it is related to our first ideas of religion and society, and recalls the pristine equality of the human race; in fine, it perpetuates the recollection of our primeval fall, of our redemption, and reacceptance by God."—Vol. i. 30–46.

These and similar passages, not merely in this work, which professes to be of a popular cast, but in others of the highest class of Catholic divinity, suggest an idea which, the more we extend our reading, the more we shall find to be just—viz., that in the greater and purer writers on religion, of whatever church or age, the leading doctrines are nearly the same, and that the differences which divide their followers, and distract the world, are seldom, on any material or important points, to be met with in writers of a superior caste. Chateaubriand is a faithful, and in some respects, perhaps, a bigoted Catholic; yet there is hardly a word here, or in any other part of his writings on religion, to which a Christian in any country may not subscribe, and which is not calculated in all ages and places to forward the great work of the purification and improvement of the human heart. Travellers have often observed that in a certain rank in all countries manners are the same; naturalists know that at a certain elevation above the sea in all latitudes we meet with the same vegetable productions; and philosophers have often remarked, that, in the highest class of intellects, opinions on almost every subject in all ages and places are the same. A similar uniformity may be observed in the principles of the greatest writers of the world on religion; and while the inferior followers of their different tenets

branch out into endless divisions, and indulge in sectarian rancour, in the more lofty regions of intellect the principles are substantially the same, and the objects of all identical. So small a proportion do all the disputed points in theology bear to the great objects of religion—love to God, charity to man, and the subjugation of human passion.

On the subject of marriage, and the reasons for its indissolubility, our author presents us with the following beautiful observations :—

"Habit and a long life together are more necessary to happiness, and even to love, than is generally imagined. No one is happy with the object of his attachment until he has passed many days, and above all, many days of misfortune, with her. The married pair must know each other to the bottom of their souls; the mysterious veil which covered the two spouses in the primitive church must be raised in its inmost folds, how closely soever it may be kept drawn to the rest of the world.

"What! on account of a fit of caprice, or a burst of passion, am I to be exposed to the fear of losing my wife and my children, and to renounce the hope of passing my declining days with them? Let no one imagine that fear will make me become a better husband. No; we do not attach ourselves to a possession of which we are not secure, we do not love a property which we are in danger of losing.

"We must not give to Hymen the wings of Love, nor make of a sacred reality a fleeting phantom. One thing is alone sufficient to destroy your happiness in such transient unions; you will constantly compare one to the other, the wife you have lost to the one you have gained; and, do not deceive yourself, the balance will always incline to the past, for so God has constructed the human heart. This distraction of a sentiment which should be indivisible will empoison all your joys. When you caress your new infant, you will think of the smiles of the one you have lost; when you press your wife to your bosom, your heart will tell you that she is not the first. Everything in man tends to unity; he is no longer happy when he is divided, and, like God, who made him in His image, his soul seeks incessantly to concentrate into one point the past, the present, and the future.

"The wife of a Christian is not a simple mortal: she is a mysterious angelic being: the flesh of the flesh, the blood of the blood of her husband. Man, in uniting himself to her, does nothing but regain part of the substance which he has lost. His soul as well as his body are incomplete without his wife: he has strength, she has beauty; he combats the enemy and labours the fields, but he understands nothing of domestic life; his companion is awanting to prepare his repast and sweeten his existence. He has his crosses, and the partner of his couch is there to soften them: his days may be sad and troubled, but in the chaste arms of his wife he finds comfort and repose. Without woman man would be rude, gross, and solitary. Woman spreads around him the flowers of existence, as the creepers of the forests which decorate the trunks of sturdy oaks with their perfumed garlands. Finally, the Christian pair live and die united: together they rear the fruits of their union; in the dust they lie side by side; and they are reunited beyond the limits of the tomb."—Vol. i. 78, 79.

The extreme unction of the Catholic Church is described in these touching words :—

"Come and behold the most moving spectacle which the world can exhibit—the death of the faithful. The dying Christian is no longer a man of this world; he belongs no farther to his country; all his relations with society have ceased. For him the calculations of time are closed, and the great era of eternity has commenced. A priest seated beside his bed pours the consolations of religion into his dying ear: the holy minister converses with the expiring penitent on the immortality of the soul; and that sublime scene which antiquity presented but once in the death of the greatest of her philosophers, is renewed every day at the couch where the humblest Christian expires.

"At length the supreme moment arrives: one sacrament has opened the gates of the world, another is about to close them; religion rocked the cradle of existence; its sweet strains and its maternal hand will lull it to sleep in the arms of death. It prepares the baptism of a second existence; but it is no longer with water, but oil, the emblem of celestial incorruption. The liberating sacrament dissolves, one by one, the chords which attach the faithful to this world: the soul, half escaped from its earthly prison, is almost visible to the senses, in the smile which plays around his lips. Already he hears the music of the seraphim; already he longs to fly to those regions, where hope divine, daughter of virtue and death, beckons him to approach. At length the angel of peace, descending from the heavens, touches with his golden sceptre his wearied eyelids, and closes them in delicious repose to the light. He dies; and so sweet has been his departure, that no one has heard his last sigh; and his friends, long after he is no more, preserve silence round his couch, still thinking that he slept: so like the sleep of infancy is the death of the just."—Vol. i. 69, 71.

It is against pride, as every one knows, that the chief efforts of the Catholic Church have always been directed, because they consider it as the source of all other crime. Whether this is a just view may, perhaps, be doubted, to the extent at least to which they carry it; but there can be but one opinion as to the eloquence of the apology which Chateaubriand makes for this selection.

"In the virtues preferred by Christianity, we perceive the same knowledge of human nature. Before the coming of Christ, the soul of man was a chaos; but no sooner was the Word heard, than all the elements arranged themselves in the moral world, as, at the same divine inspiration they had produced the marvels of material creation. The virtues ascended like pure fires into the heavens; some, like brilliant suns, attracted the regards by their resplendent light; others, more modest, sought the shade, where nevertheless their lustre could not be concealed. From that moment an admirable balance was established between the forces and the weaknesses of existence. Religion directed its thunders against pride, the vice which is nourished by the virtues; it discovers it in the inmost recesses of the heart, and follows it out in all its metamorphoses; the sacraments in a holy legion march against it, while humility, clothed in sackcloth and ashes, its eyes downcast and bathed in tears, becomes one of the chief virtues of the faithful."—Vol. i. 74.

On the tendency of all the fables concerning creation to remount to one general and eternal truth, our author presents the following reflections :—

"After this exposition of the dreams of philosophy, it may seem useless to speak of the fancy of the poets. Who does not know Deucalion and Pyrrha, the age of gold and of iron? What innumerable traditions are scattered through the earth! In India, an elephant sustains the globe; the sun in Peru has brought forth all the marvels of existence; in Canada, the Great Spirit is the father of the world; in Greenland, man has emerged from an egg; in fine, Scandinavia has beheld the birth of Askur and Emla; Odin has poured in the breath of life, Hœnerus reason, and Loedur blood and beauty.

'Askum et Emlam omni conatu destitutos
Animam nec possidebant, rationem nec habebant
Nec sanguinem, nec sermonem, nec faciem venustam.
Animam dedit Odinus, rationem dedit Hœnerus,
Loedur sanguinem addidit et faciem venustam.'

"In these various traditions, we find ourselves placed between the stories of children and the abstractions of philosophers; if we were obliged to choose, it were better to take the first.

"But to discover the original of the picture in the midst of so many copies, we must recur to that which, by its unity and the perfection of its parts, unfolds the genius of a master. It is that which we find in Genesis, the original of all those pictures which we see reproduced in so many different traditions. What can be at once more natural and more magnificent—more easy to conceive, and more in unison with human reason, than the Creator descending amidst the night of ages to create light by a word? In an instant, the sun is seen suspended in the heavens, in the midst of an immense azure vault; with invisible bonds he envelops the planets, and whirls them round his burning axle; the sea and the forests appear on the globe, and their earliest voices arise to announce to the universe that great marriage, of which God is the priest, the earth the nuptial couch, and the human race the posterity."—Vol. i. 97, 98.

On the appearance of age on the globe, and its first aspect when fresh from the hands of the Creator, the author presents an hypothesis more in unison with the imagination of a poet than the observations of a philosopher, on the gradual formation of all objects destined for a long endurance. He supposes that everything was at once created as we now see it.

"It is probable that the Author of nature planted at once aged forests and their youthful progeny; that animals arose at the same time, some full of years, others buoyant with the vigour and adorned with the grace of youth. The oaks, while they pierced with their roots the fruitful earth, without doubt bore at once the old nests of rooks, and the young progeny of doves. At once grew a chrysalis and a butterfly; the insect bounded on the grass, suspended its golden egg in the forests, or trembled in the undulations of the air. The bee, which had not yet lived a morning, already counted the generations of flowers by its ambrosia—the sheep was not without its lamb, the doe without its fawns. The thicket already contained the nightingales, astonished at the melody of their first airs, as they poured forth the new-born effusion of their infant loves.

"Had the world not arisen at once young and old, the grand, the serious, the impressive would have disappeared from nature; for all these sentiments depend for their very essence on ancient things. The marvels of

existence would have been unknown. The ruined rock would not have hung over the abyss beneath; the woods would not have exhibited that splendid variety of trunks bending under the weight of years, of trees hanging over the bed of streams. The inspired thoughts, the venerated sounds, the magic voices, the sacred horror of the forests, would have vanished with the vaults which serve for their retreats; and the solitudes of earth and heaven would have remained naked and disenchanted in losing the columns of oaks which united them. On the first day when the ocean dashed against the shore, he bathed, be assured, sands bearing all the marks of the action of his waves for ages; cliffs strewed with the eggs of innumerable sea-fowl, and rugged capes which sustained against the waters the crumbling shores of the earth.

"Without that primeval age, there would have been neither pomp nor majesty in the work of the Most High; and, contrary to all our conceptions, nature in the innocence of man would have been less beautiful than it is now in the days of his corruption. An insipid childhood of plants, of animals, of elements, would have covered the earth, without the poetical feelings which now constitute its principal charm. But God was not so feeble a designer of the grove of Eden as the incredulous would lead us to believe. Man, the sovereign of nature, was born at thirty years of age, in order that his powers should correspond with the full-grown magnificence of his new empire,—while his consort, doubtless, had already passed her sixteenth spring, though yet in the slumber of nonentity, that she might be in harmony with the flowers, the birds, the innocence, the love, the beauty of the youthful part of the universe."—Vol. i. 137, 138.

In the rhythm of prose, these are the colours of poetry; but still this was not to all appearance the order of creation. And here, as in many other instances, it will be found that the deductions of experience present conclusions more sublime than the most fervid imagination has been able to conceive. Everything announces that the great works of nature are carried on by slow and insensible gradations; continents, the abode of millions, are formed by the confluence of innumerable rills; vegetation, commencing with the lichen and the moss, rises at length into the riches and magnificence of the forest. Patient analysis, philosophical discovery, have now taught us that it was by the same slow progress that the great work of creation was accomplished. The fossil remains of antediluvian ages have laid open the primeval works of nature; the long period which elapsed before the creation of man, the vegetables which then covered the earth, the animals which sported amidst its watery wastes, the life which first succeeded to chaos, all stand revealed. To the astonishment of mankind, the *order of creation*, unfolded in Genesis, is proved by the contents of the earth beneath every part of its surface to be precisely that which has actually been followed; the *days* of the Creator's workmanship turn out to be the days of the

Most High, not of His uncreated subjects, and to correspond to ages of our ephemeral existence ; and the great sabbath of the earth took place, not, as we imagined, when the sixth sun had set after the first morning had beamed, but when the sixth period had expired, devoted by Omnipotence to the mighty undertaking. God then rested from his labours, because the great changes of matter, and the successive production and annihilation of different kinds of animated existence, ceased ; creation assumed a settled form, and laws came into operation destined for indefinite endurance. Chateaubriand said truly, that to man, when he first opened his eyes on paradise, nature appeared with all the majesty of age as well as all the freshness of youth ; but it was not in a week, but during a series of ages, that the magnificent spectacle had been assembled ; and for the undying delight of his progeny, in all future years, the powers of nature for countless time had been already exerted.

The fifth book of the *Génie du Christianisme* treats of the proofs of the existence of God, derived from the wonders of material nature ; in other words, of the splendid subject of natural theology. On such a subject, the observations of a mind so stored with knowledge, and gifted with such powers of eloquence, may be expected to be something of extraordinary excellence. Though the part of his work, accordingly, which treats of this subject, is necessarily circumscribed, from the multitude of others with which it is overwhelmed, it is of surpassing beauty, and superior in point of description to anything which has been produced on the same subject by the genius of Britain.

"There is a God! The herbs of the valley, the cedars of the mountain, bless Him—the insect sports in His beams—the elephant salutes Him with the rising orb of the day—the bird sings Him in the foliage—the thunder proclaims Him in the heavens—the ocean declares His immensity—man alone has said, 'There is no God!'

"Unite in thought, at the same instant, the most beautiful objects in nature; suppose that you see at once all the hours of the day, and all the seasons of the year; a morning of spring and a morning of autumn ; a night bespangled with stars, and a night covered with clouds ; meadows enamelled with flowers, forests hoary with snow ; fields gilded by the tints of autumn ; then alone you will have a just conception of the universe. While you are gazing on that sun which is plunging under the vault of the west, another observer admires him emerging from the gilded gates of the East. By what

unconceivable magic does that aged star, which is sinking fatigued and burning in the shades of the evening, reappear at the same instant fresh and humid with the rosy dew of the morning? At every instant of the day the glorious orb is at once rising—resplendent at noonday, and setting in the west; or rather our senses deceive us, and there is, properly speaking, no east, or south, or west in the world. Everything reduces itself to one single point, from whence the King of Day sends forth at once a triple light in one single substance. The bright splendour is perhaps that which nature can present that is most beautiful; for while it gives us an idea of the perpetual magnificence and resistless power of God, it exhibits, at the same time, a shining image of the glorious Trinity."

The instincts of animals, and their adaptation to the wants of their existence, have long furnished one of the most interesting subjects of study to the naturalist, and of meditation to the devout observer of creation. Chateaubriand has painted, with his usual descriptive powers, one of the most familiar of these examples—

"What ingenious springs move the feet of a bird? It is not by a contraction of muscles dependent on his will that he maintains himself firm upon a branch; his foot is constructed in such a way that when it is pressed in the centre, the toes close of their own accord upon the body which supports it. It results from this mechanism, that the talons of the bird grasp more or less firmly the object on which it has alighted, in proportion to the agitation, more or less violent, which it has received. Thus, when we see at the approach of night, during winter, the crows perched on the scathed summit of an aged oak, we suppose that, watchful and attentive, they maintain their place with pain during the rocking of the winds; and yet, heedless of danger, and mocking the tempest, the winds only bring them profounder slumber. The blasts of the north attach them more firmly to the branch, from whence we every instant expect to see them precipitated; and like the old seaman, whose hammock is suspended to the roof of his vessel, the more he is tossed by the winds, the more profound is his repose."—Vol. i. 147, 148.

"Amidst the different instincts which the Sovereign of the universe has implanted in nature, one of the most wonderful is that which every year brings the fish of the Pole to our temperate region. They come, without once mistaking their way, through the solitude of the ocean, to reach, on a fixed day, the stream where their hymen is to be celebrated. The spring prepares on our shores their nuptial pomp; it covers the billows with verdure, it spreads beds of moss in the waves to serve for curtains to its crystal couches. Hardly are these preparations completed when the enamelled legions appear; the animated navigators enliven our coasts; some spring aloft from the surface of the waters, others balance themselves on the waves, or diverge from a common centre like innumerable flashes of gold; these dart obliquely their shining bodies athwart the azure fluid, while others sleep in the rays of the sun, which penetrates beneath the dancing surface of the waves. All, sporting in the joys of existence, meander, return, wheel about, dash across, form in squadron, separate, and reunite; and the inhabitant of the seas, inspired by a breath of existence, pursues with bounding movements its mate, by the line of fire which is reflected from her in the stream." —Vol. i. 152, 153.

Chateaubriand's mind is full not only of the images, but the sounds, which attest the reign of animated nature.

Equally familiar with those of the desert and of the cultivated plain, he has had his susceptibility alike open in both to the impressions which arise to a pious observer from their contemplation.

"There is a law in nature relative to the cries of animals, which has not been sufficiently observed, and deserves to be so. The different sounds of the inhabitants of the desert are calculated according to the grandeur or the sweetness of the scene where they arise, and the hour of the day when they are heard. The roaring of the lion, loud, rough, and tremendous, is in unison with the desert scenes in which it is heard; while the lowing of the oxen diffuses a pleasing calm through our valleys. The goat has something trembling and savage in its cry, like the rocks and ravines from which it loves to suspend itself. The war-horse imitates the notes of the trumpet that animates him to the charge, and, as if he felt that he was not made for degrading employments, he is silent under the spur of the labourer, and neighs under the rein of the warrior. The night, by turns charming or sombre, is enlivened by the nightingale or saddened by the owl; the one sings for the zephyrs, the groves, the moon, the soul of lovers—the other for the winds, the forests, the darkness, and the dead. Finally, all the animals which live on others have a peculiar cry by which they may be distinguished by the creatures which are destined to be their prey."—Vol. i. 156.

The making of birds' nests is one of the most common objects of observation. Listen to the reflections of genius and poetry on this beautiful subject.

"The admirable wisdom of Providence is nowhere more conspicuous than in the nests of birds. It is impossible to contemplate, without emotion, the Divine goodness, which thus gives industry to the weak and foresight to the thoughtless.

"No sooner have the trees put forth their leaves, than a thousand little workmen commence their labours. Some bring long pieces of straw into the hole of an old wall, others affix their edifice to the windows of a church; these steal a hair from the mane of a horse; those bear away, with wings trembling beneath its weight, the fragment of wool which a lamb has left entangled in the briers. A thousand palaces at once arise, and every palace is a nest: within every nest is soon to be seen a charming metamorphosis; first, a beautiful egg, then a little one covered with down. The little nestling soon feels his wings begin to grow; his mother teaches him to raise himself on his bed of repose. Soon he takes courage enough to approach the edge of the nest, and casts a first look on the works of nature. Terrified and enchanted at the sight, he precipitates himself amidst his brothers and sisters, who have never as yet seen that spectacle; but, recalled a second time from his couch, the young king of the air, who still has the crown of infancy on his head, ventures to contemplate the boundless heavens, the waving summit of the pine-trees, and the vast labyrinth of foliage which lies beneath his feet. And, at the moment that the forests are rejoicing at the sight of their new inmate, an aged bird, who feels himself abandoned by his wings, quietly rests beside a stream: there, resigned and solitary, he tranquilly awaits death, on the banks of the same river where he sang his first loves, and whose trees still bear his nest and his melodious offspring."—Vol. i. 158.

The subject of the migration of the feathered tribes fur-

nishes this attentive observer of nature with many beautiful images. We have room only for the following extract :—

"In the first ages of the world, it was by the flowering of plants, the fall of the leaves, the departure and the arrival of birds, that the labourers and the shepherds regulated their labours. Thence has sprung the art of divination among certain people: they imagined that the birds which were sure to precede certain changes of the season or atmosphere, could not but be inspired by the Deity. The ancient naturalists, and the poets, to whom we are indebted for the few remains of simplicity which still linger amongst us, show us how marvellous was that manner of counting by the changes of nature, and what a charm it spread over the whole of existence. God is a profound secret. Man, created in his image, is equally incomprehensible. It was, therefore, an ineffable harmony to see the periods of his existence regulated by measures of time as harmonious as himself.

"Beneath the tents of Jacob or of Boaz, the arrival of a bird put everything in movement; the Patriarch made the circuit of the camp at the head of his followers, armed with scythes. If the report was spread that the young of the swallows had been seen wheeling about, the whole people joyfully commenced their harvest. These beautiful signs, while they directed the labours of the present, had the advantage of foretelling the vicissitudes of the approaching season. If the geese and swans arrived in abundance, it was known that the winter would be severe; did the redbreast begin to build its nest in January, the shepherds hoped in April for the roses of May. The marriage of a virgin on the margin of a fountain was represented by the first opening of the bud of the rose; and the death of the aged, who usually drop off in autumn, by the falling of leaves, or the maturity of the harvests. While the philosopher, abridging or elongating the year, extended the winter over the verdure of spring, the peasant felt no alarm that the astronomer, who came to him from heaven, would be wrong in his calculations. He knew that the nightingale would not take the season of hoarfrost for that of flowers, or make the groves resound at the winter solstice with the songs of summer. Thus the cares, the joys, the pleasures, of the rural life were determined, not by the uncertain calendar of the learned, but by the infallible signs of Him who traced his path to the sun. That sovereign Regulator wished Himself that the rites of His worship should be determined by the epochs fixed by His works; and in those days of innocence, according to the seasons and the labours they required, it was the voice of the zephyr or the tempest, of the eagle or the dove, which called the worshipper to the temple of his Creator."—Vol. i. 171.

Let no one exclaim, What have these descriptions to do with the spirit of Christianity? Gray thought otherwise when he wrote the sublime lines on visiting the Grande Chartreuse; Buchanan thought otherwise, when, in his exquisite Ode to May, he supposed the first zephyrs of spring to blow over the Islands of the Just. The work of Chateaubriand, it is to be recollected, is not merely an exposition of the doctrines, spirit, or precepts of Christianity; it is intended expressly to allure, by the charms which it exhibits, the man of the world, an unbelieving and volatile generation, to the feelings of devotion; it is meant to combine all that is delightful or lovely in the works of nature,

with all that is sublime or elevating in the revelations of religion. In his eloquent pages, therefore, we find united the Natural Theology of Paley, the Contemplations of Taylor, and the Analogy of Butler; and if the theologians will look in vain for the weighty arguments by which the English divines have established the foundation of their faith, men of ordinary education will find even more to entrance and subdue their minds.

Among the proofs of the immortality of the soul, our author, with all others who have thought upon the subject, classes the obvious disproportion between the desires and capacity of the soul, and the limits of its acquisitions and enjoyments in this world. In the following passage, this argument is placed in its just colours:—

"If it is impossible to deny that the hope of man continues to the edge of the grave; if it be true that the advantages of this world, so far from satisfying our wishes, tend only to augment the want which the soul experiences, and dig deeper the abyss which it contains within itself, we must conclude that there is something beyond the limits of time. 'Vincula hujus mundi,' says St Augustin, 'asperitatem habent veram, jucunditatem falsam, certum dolorem, incertam voluptatem, durum laborem, timidam quietem, rem plenam miseriæ, spem beatitudinis inanem.' Far from lamenting that the desire for felicity has been planted in this world, and its ultimate gratification only in another, let us discern in that only an additional proof of the goodness of God. Since sooner or later we must quit this world, Providence has placed beyond its limits a charm, which is felt as an attraction to diminish the terrors of the tomb; as a kind mother, when wishing to make her infant cross a barrier, places some agreeable object on the other side."—Vol. i. 210.

"Finally, there is another proof of the immortality of the soul, which has not been sufficiently insisted on, and that is the universal veneration of mankind for the tomb. There, by an invincible charm, life is attached to death; there the human race declares itself superior to the rest of creation, and proclaims aloud its lofty destinies. What animal regards its coffin, or disquiets itself about the ashes of its fathers? Which one has any regard for the bones of its father, or even knows its father, after the first necessities of infancy are passed? Whence comes, then, the all-powerful idea which we entertain of death? Do a few grains of dust merit so much consideration? No; without doubt we respect the bones of our fathers, because an inward voice tells us that all is not lost with them; and that is the voice which has everywhere consecrated the funeral service throughout the world; all are equally persuaded that the sleep is not eternal, even in the tomb, and that death itself is but a glorious transfiguration."—Vol. i. 217.

To the objection, that if the idea of God is innate, it must appear in children without any education, which is not generally the case, Chateaubriand replies:—

"God being a spirit, and it being impossible that he should be understood but by a spirit, an infant, in whom the powers of thought are not as

yet developed, cannot form a proper conception of the Supreme Being. We must not expect from the heart its noblest function, when the marvellous fabric is as yet in the hands of its Creator.

"Besides, there seems reason to believe that a child has at least a sort of instinct of its Creator; witness only its little reveries, its disquietudes, its fears in the night, its disposition to raise its eyes to heaven. An infant joins together its little hands, and repeats after its mother a prayer to the good God. Why does that little angel lisp with so much love and purity the name of the Supreme Being, if it has no inward consciousness of His existence in its heart?

"Behold that new-born infant, which the nurse still carries in her arms. What has it done to give so much joy to that old man, to that man in the prime of life, to that woman? Two or three syllables half-formed, which no one rightly understands, and instantly three reasonable creatures are transported with delight, from the grandfather, to whom all that life contains is known, to the young mother, to whom the greater part of it is as yet unrevealed. Who has put that power into the word of man? How does it happen that the sound of a human voice subjugates so instantaneously the human heart? What subjugates you is something allied to a mystery, which depends on causes more elevated than the interest, how strong soever, which you take in that infant; something tells you that these inarticulate words are the first openings of an immortal soul."—Vol. i. 224.

There is a subject on which human genius can hardly dare to touch,—the future felicity of the just. Our author thus treats this delicate subject:—

"The purest of sentiments in this world is admiration; but every earthly admiration is mingled with weakness, either in the object it admires or in that admiring. Imagine, then, a perfect being, which perceives at once all that is, and has, and will be; suppose that soul exempt from envy and all the weaknesses of life, incorruptible, indefatigable, unalterable; conceive it contemplating, without ceasing, the Most High, discovering incessantly new perfections; feeling existence only from the renewed sentiment of that admiration; conceive God as the sovereign beauty, the universal principle of love; figure all the attachments of earth blending in that abyss of feeling, without ceasing to love the objects of affection on this earth; imagine, finally, that the inmate of heaven has the conviction that this felicity is never to end, and you will have an idea, feeble and imperfect indeed, of the felicity of the just. They are plunged in this abyss of delight, as in an ocean from which they cannot emerge: they wish nothing; they have everything, though desiring nothing—an eternal youth, a felicity without end; a glory divine is expressed in their countenances; a sweet, noble, and majestic joy; it is a sublime feeling of truth and virtue which transports them; at every instant they experience the same rapture as a mother who regains a beloved child whom she believed lost; and that exquisite joy, too fleeting on earth, is there prolonged through the ages of eternity."—Vol. i. 241.

We intended to have gone through, in this paper, the whole *Génie du Christianisme*, and we have only concluded the first volume, so prolific of beauty are its pages. We make no apology for the length of the quotations, which have so much extended the limits of this article; any observations would be inexcusable which should abridge passages of such transcendent beauty.

The *Itinéraire de Paris à Jerusalem* is an account of the author's journey in 1806, from Paris to Greece, Constantinople, Palestine, Egypt, and Carthage. This work is not so much a book of travels, as memoirs of the feelings and impressions of the author during a journey over the shores of the Mediterranean ; the cradle, as Dr Johnson observed, of all that dignifies and has blest human nature, of our laws, our religion, and our civilisation. It may readily be anticipated that the observations of such a man, in such scenes, must contain much that is interesting and delightful : our readers may prepare themselves for a high gratification ; it is seldom that they have such an intellectual feast laid before them. We have translated the passages, both because there is no English version with which we are acquainted of this work, and because the translations which usually appear of French authors are executed in so slovenly a style.

On his first night amidst the ruins of Sparta, our author gives the following interesting account :—

"After supper Joseph brought me my saddle, which usually serves for my pillow. I wrapped myself in my cloak, and slept on the banks of the Eurotas under a laurel. The night was so clear and serene, that the Milky Way formed a resplendent arch, reflected in the waters of the river, and by the light of which I could read. I slept with my eyes turned towards the heavens, and with the constellation of the Swan of Leda directly above my head. Even at this distance of time I recollect the pleasure I experienced in sleeping thus in the woods of America, and still more in awakening in the middle of the night. I there heard the sound of the wind rustling through those profound solitudes, the cry of the stag and the deer, the fall of a distant cataract ; while the fire at my feet, half-extinguished, reddened from below the foliage of the forest. I even experienced a pleasure from the voice of the Iroquois, when he uttered his cry in the midst of the untrodden woods, and by the light of the stars, amidst the silence of nature, proclaimed his unfettered freedom. Emotions such as these please at twenty years of age, because life is then so full of vigour that it suffices, as it were, for itself; and because there is something in early youth which incessantly urges towards the mysterious and the unknown ; *ipsi sibi somnia fingunt ;* but in a more mature age the mind reverts to more imperishable emotions; it inclines, most of all, to the recollections and the examples of history. I would still sleep willingly on the banks of the Eurotas and the Jordan, if the shades of the three hundred Spartans, or of the twelve sons of Jacob, were to visit my dreams ; but I would no longer set out to visit lands which have never been explored by the plough. I now feel the desire for those old deserts which shroud the walls of Babylon or the legions of Pharsalia ; fields of which the furrows are engraven on human thought, and where I may find man as I am, the blood, the tears, and the labours of man."—Vol. i. 86, 87.

From Laconia our author directed his steps by the

isthmus of Corinth to Athens. Of his first feelings in the ancient cradle of taste and genius, he gives the following beautiful description :—

"Overwhelmed with fatigue, I slept for some time without interruption, when I was at length awakened by the sound of Turkish music, proceeding from the summits of the Propyleum. At the same moment a Mussulman priest from one of the mosques called the faithful to pray in the city of Minerva. I cannot describe what I felt at the sound; that Iman had no need to remind one of the lapse of time; his voice alone in these scenes announced the revolution of ages.

"This fluctuation in human affairs is the more remarkable from the contrast which it affords to the unchangeableness of nature. As if to insult the instability of human affairs, the animals and the birds experience no change in their empires, nor alterations in their habits. I saw, when sitting on the hill of the Muses, the storks form themselves into a wedge, and wing their flight towards the shores of Africa. For two thousand years they have made the same voyage—they have remained free and happy in the city of Solon, as in that of the chief of the black eunuchs. From the height of their nests, which the revolutions below have not been able to reach, they have seen the races of men disappear; while impious generations have arisen on the tombs of their religious parents, the young stork has never ceased to nourish its aged parent. I involuntarily fell into these reflections, for the stork is the friend of the traveller: 'it knows the seasons of heaven.' These birds were frequently my companions in the solitudes of America; I have often seen them perched on the wigwams of the savage; and when I saw them rise from another species of desert, from the ruins of the Parthenon, I could not avoid recognising a companion in the desolation of empires.

"The first thing which strikes a traveller in the monuments of Athens is their lovely colour. In our climate, where the heavens are charged with smoke and rain, the whitest stone soon becomes tinged with black and green. It is not thus with the atmosphere of the city of Theseus. The clear sky and brilliant sun of Greece have shed over the marble of Paros and Pentelicus a golden hue, comparable only to the finest and most fleeting tints of autumn.

"Before I saw these splendid remains, I had fallen into the ordinary error concerning them. I conceived they were perfect in their details, but that they wanted grandeur. But the first glance at the originals is sufficient to show that the genius of the architects has supplied, in the magnitude of proportion, what was wanting in size; and Athens is accordingly filled with stupendous edifices. The Athenians, a people far from rich, few in number, have succeeded in moving gigantic masses; the blocks of stone in the Pnyx and the Propyleum are literally quarters of rock. The slabs which stretch from pillar to pillar are of enormous dimensions: the columns of the Temple of Jupiter Olympius are above sixty feet in height, and the walls of Athens, including those which stretched to the Piræus, extended over nine leagues, and were so broad that two chariots could drive on them abreast. The Romans never erected more extensive fortifications.

"By what strange fatality has it happened that the *chefs d'œuvre* of antiquity, which the moderns go so far to admire, have owed their destruction chiefly to the moderns themselves? The Parthenon was entire in 1687; the Christians at first converted it into a church, and the Turks into a mosque. The Venetians, in the middle of the light of the seventeenth century, bombarded the Acropolis with red-hot shot; a shell fell on the Parthenon, pierced the roof, communicated to a few barrels of powder, and blew into the air great part of the edifice, which did less honour to the gods

of antiquity than the genius of man. No sooner was the town captured, than Morosini, in the design of embellishing Venice with its spoils, took down the statues from the front of the Temple; and another modern has completed, from love for the arts, that which the Venetian had begun. The invention of firearms has been fatal to the monuments of antiquity. Had the barbarians been acquainted with the use of gunpowder, not a Greek or Roman edifice would have survived their invasion; they would have blown up even the Pyramids in the search for hidden treasures. One year of war in our times will destroy more than a century of combats among the ancients. Everything among the moderns seems opposed to the perfection of art; their country, their manners, their dress, even their discoveries."—Vol. i. 136, 145.

These observations are perfectly well founded. No one can have visited the monuments of the Greeks on the shores of the Mediterranean, without perceiving that they were thoroughly masters of an element of grandeur hitherto but little understood among the moderns—that arising from gigantic masses of stone. The feeling of sublimity which they produce is indescribable; it equals that of Gothic edifices of a thousand times the size. Every traveller must have felt this upon looking at the immense masses which rise in solitary magnificence on the plains at Stonehenge. The great block in the tomb of Agamemnon at Argos; those in the Cyclopean Walls of Volterra, and in the ruins of Agrigentum in Sicily, strike the beholder with a degree of astonishment bordering on awe. To have moved such enormous masses seems the work of a race of mortals superior in thought and power to this degenerate age; it is impossible, in visiting them, to avoid the feeling that you are beholding the work of giants. It is to this cause, we are persuaded, that the extraordinary impression produced by the Pyramids, and all the works of the Cyclopean age in architecture, is to be ascribed; and as it is an element of sublimity within the reach of all who have considerable funds at their command, it is earnestly to be hoped that it will not be overlooked by our architects. Strange that so powerful an ingredient in the sublime should have been lost sight of in proportion to the ability of the age to produce it, and that the monuments raised in the infancy of the mechanical art, should still be those in which alone it is to be seen to perfection!

We willingly translate the description of the unrivalled scene viewed from the Acropolis by the same poetical hand; a description so glowing, and yet so true, that it almost

recalls, after the lapse of years, the fading tints of the original on the memory.

"To understand the view from the Acropolis, you must figure to yourself all the plain at its foot; bare and clothed in a dusky heath, intersected here and there by woods of olives, squares of barley, and ridges of vines; you must conceive the heads of columns, and the ends of ancient ruins, emerging from the midst of that cultivation; Albanian women washing their clothes at the fountain or the scanty streams; peasants leading their asses, laden with provisions, into the modern city: those ruins so celebrated, those isles, those seas, whose names are engraven on the memory, illumined by a resplendent light. I have seen from the rock of the Acropolis the sun rise between the two summits of Mount Hymettus: the ravens, which nestle round the citadel, but never fly over its summit, floating in the air beneath, their glossy wings reflecting the rosy tints of the morning: columns of light smoke ascending from the villages on the sides of the neighbouring mountains marked the colonies of bees on the far-famed Hymettus; and the ruins of the Parthenon were illuminated by the finest tints of pink and violet. The sculptures of Phidias, struck by a horizontal ray of gold, seemed to start from their marble bed by the depth and mobility of their shadows: in the distance, the sea and the Piræus were resplendent with light, while on the verge of the western horizon, the citadel of Corinth, glittering in the rays of the rising sun, shone like a rock of purple and fire."—Vol. i. 149.

These are the colours of poetry; but beside this brilliant passage of French description, we willingly place the equally correct and still more thrilling lines of our own poet.

"Slow sinks, more beauteous ere his race be run,
Along Morea's hills the setting sun,
Not as in northern clime obscurely bright,
But one unclouded blaze of living light;
O'er the hushed deep the yellow beams he throws,
Gilds the green wave that trembles as it glows;
On old Ægina's rock and Idra's isle,
The God of Gladness sheds his parting smile;
O'er his own regions lingering loves to shine,
Though there his altars are no more divine;
Descending fast, the mountain shadows kiss
Thy glorious gulf, unconquer'd Salamis!
Their azure arches through the long expanse,
More deeply purpled meet his mellowing glance,
And tenderest tints, along their summits driven,
Mark his gay course and own the hues of heaven,
Till, darkly shaded from the land and deep,
Behind his Delphian cliff he sinks to sleep."

The columns of the temple of Jupiter Olympius produced the same effects on the enthusiastic mind of Chateaubriand as they do on every traveller. But he has added some reflections highly descriptive of the peculiar turn of his mind.

"At length we came to the great isolated columns placed in the quarter which is called the city of Adrian. On a portion of the architrave which unites two of the columns, is to be seen a piece of masonry, once the abode of a hermit. It is impossible to conceive how that building, which is still

entire, could have been erected on the summit of one of these prodigious columns, whose height is above sixty feet. Thus this vast temple, at which the Athenians toiled for seven centuries, which all the kings of Asia laboured to finish, which Adrian, the ruler of the world, had first the glory to complete, has sunk under the hand of time, and the cell of a hermit has remained undecayed on its ruins. A miserable cabin is borne aloft on two columns of marble, as if fortune had wished to exhibit, on that magnificent pedestal, a monument of its triumph and its caprice.

"These columns, though twenty feet higher than those of the Parthenon, are far from possessing their beauty. The degeneracy of taste is apparent in their construction ; but isolated and dispersed as they are, on a naked and desert plain, their effect is imposing in the highest degree. I stopped at their feet to hear the wind whistle through the Corinthian foliage on their summits ; like the solitary palms which rise here and there amidst the ruins of Alexandria. When the Turks are threatened by any calamity, they bring a lamb into this place, and constrain it to bleat, with its face turned to heaven. Being unable to find the voice of innocence among men, they have recourse to the new-born lamb to mitigate the anger of heaven."—Vol. i. 152, 153.

He followed the footsteps of Chandler along the Long Walls to the Piræus, and found that profound solitude in that once busy and animated scene, which is felt to be so impressive by every traveller.

"If Chandler was astonished at the solitude of the Piræus, I can safely assert that I was not less astonished than he. We had made the circuit of that desert shore ; three harbours had met our eyes, and in all that space we had not seen a single vessel! The only spectacle to be seen was the ruins and the rocks on the shore—the only sounds that could be heard were the cry of the seafowl, and the murmur of the wave, which, breaking on the tomb of Themistocles, drew forth a perpetual sigh from the abode of eternal silence. Borne away by the sea, the ashes of the conqueror of Xerxes repose beneath the waves, side by side with the bones of the Persians. In vain I sought the Temple of Venus, the long gallery, and the symbolical statue which represented the Athenian people ; the image of that implacable democracy was for ever fallen, beside the walls where the exiled citizens came to implore a return to their country. Instead of those superb arsenals, of those Agoræ resounding with the voice of the sailors ; of those edifices which rivalled the beauty of the city of Rhodes, I saw nothing but a ruined convent and a solitary magazine. A single Turkish sentinel is perpetually seated on the coast ; months and years revolve without a bark presenting itself to his sight. Such is the deplorable state into which these ports, once so famous, have now fallen. Who has overturned so many monuments of gods and men ? The hidden power which overthrows everything, and is itself subject to the Unknown God whose altar St Paul beheld at Phalera."—Vol. i. 157, 158.

The fruitful theme of the decay of Greece has called forth many of the finest apostrophes of our moralists and poets. On this subject Chateaubriand offers the following striking observations :—

"One would imagine that Greece itself announced, by its mourning, the misfortunes of its children. In general, the country is uncultivated, the soil

bare, rough, savage, of a brown and withered aspect. There are no rivers, properly so called, but little streams and torrents, which become dry in summer. No farm-houses are to be seen on the farms; no labourers, no chariots, no oxen, or horses of agriculture. Nothing can be figured so melancholy as to see the track of a modern wheel, where you can still trace in the worn parts of the rock the track of ancient wheels. Coast along that shore, bordered by a sea hardly more desolate; place on the summit of a rock a ruined tower, an abandoned convent; figure a minaret rising up in the midst of the solitude as a badge of slavery—a solitary flock feeding on a cape, surmounted by ruined columns—the turban of a Turk scaring the few goats which browse on the hills, and you will obtain a just idea of modern Greece.

"On the eve of leaving Greece, at the Cape of Sunium, I did not abandon myself alone to the romantic ideas which the beauty of the scene was fitted to inspire. I retraced in my mind the history of that country; I strove to discover in the ancient prosperity of Athens and Sparta the cause of their present misfortunes, and in their present situation the germ of future glory. The breaking of the sea, which insensibly increased against the rocks at the foot of the Cape, at length reminded me that the wind had risen, and that it was time to resume my voyage. We descended to the vessel, and found the sailors already prepared for our departure. We pushed out to sea, and the breeze, which blew fresh from the land, bore us rapidly towards Zea. As we receded from the shore, the columns of Sunium rose more beautiful above the waves: their pure white appeared well defined in the dark azure of the distant sky. We were already far from the Cape; but we still heard the murmur of the waves, which broke on the cliffs at its foot, the whistle of the winds through its solitary pillars, and the cry of the sea-birds which wheel round the stormy promontory; they were the last sounds which I heard on the shores of Greece."—Vol. i. 196.

"The Greeks did not excel less in the choice of the site of their edifices than in the forms and proportions. The greater part of the promontories of Peloponnesus, Attica, and Ionia, and the Islands of the Archipelago, are marked by temples, trophies, or tombs. These monuments, surrounded as they generally are with woods and rocks, beheld in all the changes of light and shadow, sometimes in the midst of clouds and lightning, sometimes by the light of the moon, sometimes gilded by the rising sun, sometimes flaming in his setting beams, throw an indescribable charm over the shores of Greece. The earth, thus decorated, resembles the old Cybele, who, crowned and seated on the shore, commanded her son Neptune to spread the waves beneath her feet.

"Christianity, to which we owe the sole architecture in unison with our manners, has also taught how to place our true monuments: our chapels, our abbeys, our monasteries, are dispersed on the summits of hills; not that the choice of the site was always the work of the architect, but that an art which is in unison with the feelings of the people, seldom errs far in what is really beautiful. Observe, on the other hand, how wretchedly almost all our edifices copied from the antique are placed. Not one of the heights around Paris is ornamented with any of the splendid edifices with which the city is filled. The modern Greek edifices resemble the corrupted language which they speak at Sparta and Athens: it is in vain to maintain that it is the language of Homer and Plato; a mixture of uncouth words, and of foreign constructions, betrays at every instant the invasion of the barbarians.

"To the loveliest sunset in nature succeeded a serene night. The firmament, reflected in the waves, seemed to sleep in the midst of the sea. The evening star, my faithful companion in my journey, was ready to sink beneath the horizon; its place could only be distinguished by the rays of light which it occasionally shed upon the water, like a dying taper in the distance. At intervals, the perfumed breeze from the islands which we

passed entranced the senses, and agitated on the surface of the ocean the glassy image of the heavens."—Vol. i. 182, 183.

The appearance of morning in the sea of Marmora is described in not less glowing colours.

"At four in the morning we weighed anchor, and as the wind was fair, we found ourselves in less than an hour at the extremity of the waters of the river. The scene was worthy of being described. On the right, Aurora rose above the headlands of Asia; on the left was extended the sea of Marmora; the heavens in the east were of a fiery red, which grew paler in proportion as the morning advanced; the morning star still shone in that empurpled light; and above it you could barely descry the pale circle of the moon. The picture changed while I still contemplated it; soon a blended glory of rays of rose and gold, diverging from a common centre, mounted to the zenith: these columns were effaced, revived, and effaced anew, until the sun rose above the horizon, and confounded all the lesser shades in one universal blaze of light."—Vol. i. 236.

His journey into the Holy Land awakened a new and not less interesting train of ideas, throughout the whole of which we recognise the peculiar features of M. de Chateaubriand's mind: a strong and poetical sense of the beauties of nature—a memory fraught with historical recollections—a deep sense of religion, manifested, however, rather as it affects the imagination and the passions than the judgment. It is a mere chimera to suppose that such aids are to be rejected by the friends of Christianity, or that truth may with safety discard the aid of fancy, either in subduing the passions or affecting the heart. On the contrary, every day's experience must convince us that, for one who can understand an argument, hundreds can enjoy a romance; and that truth, to affect multitudes, must condescend to wear the garb of fancy. It is, no doubt, of vast importance that works should exist in which the truths of religion are unfolded with lucid precision, and its principles defined with the force of reason; but it is at least of equal moment that others should be found in which the graces of eloquence and the fervour of enthusiasm form an attraction to those who are insensible to graver considerations; where the reader is tempted to follow a path which he finds only strewed with flowers, and he unconsciously inhales the breath of eternal life.

"Così all Egro fanciul porgiamo aspersi
Di soave licor gli orsi del vaso,
Succhi amari ingannato intanto ei beve,
E dal inganno sua vita riceve."

" On nearing the coast of Judea, the first visitors we received were three swallows. They were perhaps on their way from France, and pursuing their course to Syria. I was strongly tempted to ask them what news they brought from that paternal roof which I had so long quitted. I recollect that, in years of infancy, I spent entire hours in watching with an indescribable pleasure the course of swallows in autumn, when assembling in crowds previous to their annual migration: a secret instinct told me that I too should be a traveller. They assembled in the end of autumn around a great fishpond; there, amidst a thousand evolutions and flights in air, they seemed to try their wings, and prepare for their long pilgrimage. Whence is it that, of all the recollections in existence, we prefer those which are connected with our cradle? The illusions of self-love, the pleasures of youth, do not recur with the same charm to the memory; we find in them, on the contrary, frequent bitterness and pain; but the slightest circumstances revive in the heart the recollections of infancy, and always with a fresh charm. On the shores of the lakes in America, in an unknown desert, which was sublime only from the effect of solitude, a swallow has frequently recalled to my recollection the first years of my life; as here, on the coast of Syria, they recalled them in sight of an ancient land resounding with the traditions of history and the voice of ages.

" The air was so fresh and so balmy, that all the passengers remained on deck during the night. At six in the morning I was awakened by a confused hum; I opened my eyes, and saw all the pilgrims crowding towards the prow of the vessel. I asked what it was? they all replied, 'Signor, il Carmelo.' I instantly rose from the plank on which I was stretched, and eagerly looked out for the sacred mountain. Every one strove to show it to me, but I could see nothing by reason of the dazzling of the sun, which now rose above the horizon. The moment had something in it that was august and impressive; all the pilgrims, with their chaplets in their hands, remained in silence, watching for the appearance of the Holy Land; the captain prayed aloud, and not a sound was to be heard but that prayer and the rush of the vessel, as it ploughed with a fair wind through the azure sea. From time to time the cry arose, from those in elevated parts of the vessel, that they saw Mount Carmel, and at length I myself perceived it like a round globe under the rays of the sun. I then fell on my knees, after the manner of the Latin pilgrims. My first impression was not the kind of agitation which I experienced on approaching the coast of Greece, but the sight of the cradle of the Israelites, and of the country of Christ, filled me with awe and veneration. I was about to descend on the land of miracles —on the birthplace of the sublimest poetry that has ever appeared on earth —on the spot where, speaking only as it has affected human history, the most wonderful event has occurred which ever changed the destinies of the species. I was about to visit the scenes which had been seen before me by Godfrey of Bouillon, Raymond of Toulouse, Tancred the Brave, Richard Cœur-de-Lion, and Saint Louis, whose virtues even the infidels respected. How could an obscure pilgrim like myself dare to tread a soil ennobled by such recollections!"—Vol. i. 263–265.

Nothing is more striking in the whole work than the description of the Dead Sea and the Valley of Jordan. He has contrived to bring the features of that extraordinary scene more completely before us than any of the numerous English travellers who have preceded or followed him on the same route.

" We quitted the convent at three in the afternoon, ascended the torrent

of Cedron, and at length, crossing the ravine, rejoined our route to the east. An opening in the mountain gave us a passing view of Jerusalem. I hardly recognised the city; it seemed a mass of broken rocks; the sudden appearance of that city of desolation in the midst of the wilderness had something in it almost terrifying. She was, in truth, the Queen of the Desert.

"As we advanced, the aspect of the mountains continued constantly the same, that is, a powdery white—without shade, a tree, or even moss. At half-past four, we descended from the lofty chain we had hitherto traversed, and wound along another of inferior elevation. At length we arrived at the last of the chain of heights, which close in on the west the Valley of Jordan and the Dead Sea. The sun was nearly setting; we dismounted from our horses, and I lay down to contemplate at leisure the lake, the valley, and the river.

"When you speak in general of a valley, you conceive it either cultivated or uncultivated; if the former, it is filled with villages, corn-fields, vineyards, and flocks; if the latter, it presents grass or forests; if it is watered by a river, that river has windings, and the sinuosities or projecting points afford agreeable and varied landscapes. But here there is nothing of the kind. Conceive two long chains of mountains running parallel from north to south, without projections, without recesses, without vegetation. The ridge on the east, called the Mountains of Arabia, is the most elevated; viewed at the distance of eight or ten leagues, it resembles a vast wall, extremely similar to the Jura, as seen from the Lake of Geneva, from its form and azure tint. You can perceive neither summits nor the smallest peaks; only here and there slight inequalities, as if the hand of the painter who traced the long lines on the sky had occasionally trembled.

"The chain on the eastern side forms part of the mountains of Judea—less elevated and more uneven than the ridge on the west: it differs also in its character; it exhibits great masses of rock and sand, which occasionally present all the varieties of ruined fortifications, armed men, and floating banners. On the side of Arabia, on the other hand, black rocks, with perpendicular flanks, spread from afar their shadows over the waters of the Dead Sea. The smallest bird could not find in those crevices of rock a morsel of food; everything announces a country which has fallen under the divine wrath; everything inspires the horror at the incest from whence sprang Ammon and Moab.

"The valley which lies between these mountains resembles the bottom of a sea, from which the waves have long ago withdrawn: banks of gravel, a dried bottom, rocks covered with salt, deserts of moving sand: here and there stunted arbutus shrubs grow with difficulty on that arid soil; their leaves are covered with the salt which had nourished their roots, while their bark has the scent and taste of smoke. Instead of villages, nothing but the ruins of towers are to be seen. Through the midst of the valley flows a discoloured stream, which seems to drag its lazy course unwillingly towards the lake. Its course is not to be discerned by the water, but by the willows and shrubs which skirt its banks—the Arab conceals himself in these thickets to waylay and rob the pilgrim.

"Such are the places rendered famous by the malediction of Heaven: that river is the Jordan—that lake is the Dead Sea. It appears with a serene surface; but the guilty cities which are embosomed in its waves have poisoned its waters. Its solitary abysses can sustain the life of no living thing; no vessel ever ploughed its bosom; its shores are without trees, without birds, without verdure; its water, frightfully salt, is so heavy that the highest wind can hardly raise it.

"In travelling in Judea, an extreme feeling of ennui frequently seizes the mind, from the sterile and monotonous aspect of the objects which are presented to the eye; but when journeying on through these pathless deserts, the expanse seems to spread out to infinity before you, the ennui disappears,

and a secret terror is experienced, which, far from lowering the soul, elevates and inflames the genius. These extraordinary scenes reveal the land desolated by miracles; that burning sun, the impetuous eagle, the barren fig-tree—all the poetry, all the pictures of Scripture are there. Every name recalls a mystery; every grotto speaks of the life to come; every peak re-echoes the voice of a prophet. God Himself has spoken on these shores: these dried-up torrents, these cleft rocks, these tombs rent asunder, attest His resistless hand: the desert appears mute with terror; and you feel that it has never ventured to break silence since it heard the voice of the Eternal." —Vol. i. 317.

"I employed two complete hours in wandering on the shores of the Dead Sea, notwithstanding the remonstrances of the Bedouins, who pressed me to quit that dangerous region. I was desirous of seeing the Jordan, at the place where it discharges itself into the lake; but the Arabs refused to lead me thither, because the river, at a league from its mouth, makes a detour to the left, and approaches the mountains of Arabia. It was necessary, therefore, to direct our steps towards the curve which was nearest us. We struck our tents, and travelled for an hour and a half with excessive difficulty, through a fine and silvery sand. We were moving towards a little wood of willows and tamarinds, which, to my great surprise, I perceived growing in the midst of the desert. All of a sudden the Bethlemites stopped, and pointed to something at the bottom of a ravine, which had not yet attracted my attention. Without being able to say what it was, I perceived a sort of sand rolling on through the fixed banks which surrounded it. I approached it, and saw a yellow stream which could hardly be distinguished from the sand of its two banks. It was deeply furrowed through the rocks, and with difficulty rolled on, a stream surcharged with sand: it was the Jordan.

"I had seen the great rivers of America, with the pleasure which is inspired by the magnificent works of nature. I had hailed the Tiber with ardour, and sought with the same interest the Eurotas and the Cephisus; but on none of these occasions did I experience the intense emotion which I felt on approaching the Jordan. Not only did that river recall the earliest antiquity, and a name rendered immortal in the finest poetry, but its banks were the theatre of the miracles of our religion. Judea is the only country which recalls at once the earliest recollections of man, and our first impressions of heaven; and thence arises a mixture of feeling in the mind, which no other part of the world can produce."—Vol. i. 327, 328.

The peculiar turn of his mind renders our author, in an especial manner, partial to the description of sad and solitary scenes. The following description of the Valley of Jehoshaphat is in his best style :—

"The Valley of Jehoshaphat has in all ages served as the burying-place to Jerusalem: you meet there, side by side, monuments of the most distant times and of the present century. The Jews still come there to die, from all the corners of the earth. A stranger sells to them, for almost its weight in gold, the land which contains the bones of their fathers. Solomon planted that valley: the shadow of the Temple by which it was overhung—the torrent, called after grief, which traversed it—the Psalms which David there composed—the Lamentations of Jeremiah, which its rocks re-echoed, render it the fitting abode of the tomb. Jesus Christ commenced his Passion in the same place: that innocent David there shed, for the expiation of our sins, those tears which the guilty David let fall for his own transgressions. Few names awaken in our minds recollections so solemn as the Valley of Jehoshaphat. It is so full of mysteries, that, according to

the Prophet Joel, all mankind will be assembled there before the Eternal Judge.

"The aspect of this celebrated valley is desolate; the western side is bounded by a ridge of lofty rocks which support the walls of Jerusalem, above which the towers of the city appear. The eastern is formed by the Mount of Olives, and another eminence called the Mount of Scandal, from the idolatry of Solomon. These two mountains, which adjoin each other, are almost bare, and of a red and sombre hue; on their desert side you see here and there some black and withered vineyards, some wild olives, some ploughed land, covered with hyssop, and a few ruined chapels. At the bottom of the valley, you perceive a torrent, traversed by a single arch, which appears of great antiquity The stones of the Jewish cemetery appear like a mass of ruins at the foot of the Mountain of Scandal, under the village of Siloam. You can hardly distinguish the buildings of the village from the ruins with which they are surrounded. Three ancient monuments are particularly conspicuous: those of Zachariah, Jehoshaphat, and Absalom. The sadness of Jerusalem, from which no smoke ascends, and in which no sound is to be heard; the solitude of the surrounding mountains, where not a living creature is to be seen; the disorder of those tombs, ruined, ransacked, and half-exposed to view, would almost induce one to believe that the last trump had been heard, and that the dead were about to rise in the Valley of Jehoshaphat."—Vol. ii. 34, 35.

Chateaubriand, after visiting with the devotion of a pilgrim the Holy Sepulchre, and all the scenes of our Saviour's sufferings, spent a day in examining the scenes of the Crusaders' triumphs, and comparing the descriptions in Tasso's *Jerusalem Delivered* with the places where the events which they recorded actually occurred. He found them in general so extremely exact, that it was difficult to avoid the conviction that the poet had been on the spot. He even fancied he discovered the scene of the Flight of Erminia, and the inimitable combat and death of Clorinda.

From the Holy Land he sailed to Egypt; and we have the following graphic picture of the approach to that cradle of art and civilisation:—

"On the 20th October, at five in the morning, I perceived on the green and ruffled surface of the water a line of foam, and beyond it a pale and still ocean. The captain clapped me on the shoulder, and said in French, 'Nile;' and soon we entered and glided through those celebrated waters. A few palm-trees and a minaret announce the situation of Rosetta, but the town itself is invisible. These shores resemble those of the coast of Florida; they are totally different from those of Italy or Greece; everything recalls the tropical regions.

"At ten o'clock we at length discovered, beneath the palm-trees, a line of sand which extended westward to the promontory of Aboukir, before which we were obliged to pass before arriving opposite to Alexandria. At five in the evening the shore suddenly changed its aspect. The palm-trees seemed planted in lines along the shore, like the elms along the roads in France. Nature appears to take a pleasure in thus recalling the ideas of civilisation in a country where that civilisation first arose, and barbarism

has now resumed its sway. It was eleven o'clock when we cast anchor before the city, and as it was some time before we could get ashore, I had full leisure to follow out the contemplation which the scene awakened.

"I saw on my right several vessels, and the castle, which stands on the site of the Tower of Pharos. On my left, the horizon seemed shut in by sand-hills, ruins, and obelisks; immediately in front extended a long wall, with a few houses appearing above it; not a light was to be seen on shore, and not a sound came from the city. This, nevertheless, was Alexandria, the rival of Nemphis and Thebes, which once contained three millions of inhabitants, which was the sanctuary of the Muses, and the abode of science amidst a benighted world. Here were heard the orgies of Antony and Cleopatra, and here was Cæsar received with more than regal splendour by the Queen of the East. But in vain I listened. A fatal talisman had plunged the people into a hopeless calm: that talisman is the despotism which extinguishes every joy, which stifles even the cry of suffering. And what sound could arise in a city of which at least a third is abandoned; another third of which is surrounded only by the tombs of its former inhabitants; and of which the third which still survives between those dead extremities, is a species of breathing trunk, destitute of the force even to shake off its chains, and placed between ruins and the tomb?" —Vol. ii. 163.

It is to be regretted that Chateaubriand did not visit Upper Egypt. His ardent and learned mind would have found ample room for eloquent declamation amidst the gigantic ruins of Luxor, and the Sphinx avenues of Thebes. The inundation of the Nile, however, prevented him from seeing even the Pyramids nearer than Grand Cairo; and when on the verge of that interesting region, he was compelled unwillingly to retrace his steps to the French shores. After a tempestuous voyage along the coast of Libya, he cast anchor off the ruins of Carthage; and thus he describes his feelings on surveying those venerable remains:—

"From the summit of Byrsa the eye embraces the ruins of Carthage, which are more considerable than are generally imagined: they resemble those of Sparta, having nothing well preserved, but embracing a considerable space. I saw them in the middle of February: the olives, the fig-trees, were already bursting into leaf: large bushes of angelica and acanthus formed tufts of verdure, amidst the remains of marble of every colour. In the distance, I cast my eyes over the Isthmus, the double sea, the distant isles, a cerulean sea, a smiling plain, and azure mountains. I saw forests, and vessels, and aqueducts; Moorish villages, and Mahometan hermitages; glittering minarets, and the white buildings of Tunis. Surrounded with the most touching recollections, I thought alternately of Dido, Sophonisba, and the noble wife of Asdrubal; I contemplated the vast plains where the legions of Hannibal, Scipio, and Cæsar were buried: My eyes sought for the sight of Utica. Alas! The remains of the palace of Tiberius still exist in the island of Capri, and you search in vain at Utica for the house of Cato. Finally, the terrible Vandals, the rapid Moors, passed before my recollection, which fixed at last on Saint Louis expiring on that inhospitable shore. May the story of the death of that prince terminate this itinerary; fortunate to re-enter, as it were, into my country

by the ancient monument of his virtues, and to close at the sepulchre of that King of holy memory my long pilgrimage to the tombs of illustrious men."—Vol. ii. 257, 258.

"As long as his strength permitted, the dying monarch gave instructions to his son Philip; and when his voice failed him, he wrote with a faltering hand these precepts, which no Frenchman, worthy of the name, will ever be able to read without emotion. 'My son, the first thing which I enjoin you is to love God with all your heart; for without that no man can be saved. Beware of violating His laws; rather endure the worst torments than sin against His commandments. Should He send you adversity, receive it with humility, and bless the hand which chastens you; and believe that you have well deserved it, and that it will turn to your weal. Should He try you with prosperity, thank Him with humility of heart, and be not elated by His goodness. Do justice to every one, as well the poor as the rich. Be liberal, free, and courteous to your servants, and cause them to love as well as fear you. Should any controversy or tumult arise, sift it to the bottom, whether the result be favourable or unfavourable to your interests. Take care, in an especial manner, that your subjects live in peace and tranquillity under your reign. Respect and preserve their privileges, such as they have received them from their ancestors, and preserve them with care and love. And now, I give you every blessing which a father can bestow on his child; praying the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, that they may defend you from all adversities; and that we may again, after this mortal life is ended, be united before God, and adore His majesty for ever!'"—Vol. ii. 264.

"The style of Chateaubriand," says Napoleon, "is not that of Racine, it is that of a prophet; he has received from nature the sacred flame; it breathes in all his works."* It is of no common man—*being a political opponent*—that Napoleon would have said these words. Chateaubriand had done nothing to gain favour with the French Emperor; on the contrary, he irritated him by throwing up his employment and leaving his country, upon the assassination of the Duke d'Enghien. In truth, nothing is more remarkable, amidst the selfishness of political apostasy in France, than the uniform consistence and disinterestedness of this great man's opinions. His principles, indeed, were not all the same at fifty as at twenty-five; we should be glad to know whose are, excepting those who are so obtuse as to derive no light from the extension of knowledge and the acquisitions of experience? Change is so far from being despicable, that it is highly honourable in itself, and when it proceeds from the natural modification of the mind from the progress of years, or the lessons of more extended experience. It becomes contemptible only when it arises on the suggestions of interest, or the desires of ambition. Now, Chateaubriand's

* *Memoirs of Napoleon*, iv. 342.

changes of opinion have all been in opposition to his interest; and he has suffered at different periods of his life from his resistance to the mandates of authority, and his rejection of the calls of ambition. In early life he was exiled from France, and shared in all the hardships of the emigrants, from his attachment to Royalist principles. At the earnest request of Napoleon, he accepted office under the Imperial Government, but he relinquished it, and again became an exile upon the murder of the Duke d'Enghien. The influence of his writings was so powerful in favour of the Bourbons, at the period of the Restoration, that Louis XVIII. truly said, they were worth more than an army. He followed the dethroned monarch to Ghent, and contributed much, by his powerful genius, to consolidate the feeble elements of his power, after the fall of Napoleon. Called to the helm of affairs in 1824, he laboured to accommodate the temper of the monarchy to the increasing spirit of freedom in the country, and fell into disgrace with the Court, and was distrusted by the Royal Family, because he strove to introduce those popular modifications into the administration of affairs, which might have prevented the Revolution of July; and finally, he has resisted all the efforts of the Citizen King to engage his great talents in defence of the throne of the Barricades. True to his principles, he has exiled himself from France, to preserve his independence; and consecrated in a foreign land his illustrious name to the defence of the child of misfortune.

Chateaubriand is not only an eloquent and beautiful writer, he is also a profound scholar, and an enlightened thinker. His knowledge of history and classical literature is equalled only by his intimate acquaintance with the early annals of the church, and the fathers of the Catholic faith; while in his speeches delivered in the Chamber of Peers since the Restoration, will be found not only the most eloquent, but the most complete and satisfactory dissertations on the political state of France during that period, which are anywhere to be met with. It is a singular circumstance, that an author of such great and varied acquirements, who is universally allowed by all parties in France to be their greatest living writer, should hardly be known except by name to the great body of readers in this country.

His greatest work, that on which his fame will rest with posterity, is the *Genius of Christianity*, from which such ample quotations have already been given. The next is the *Martyrs*, a romance, in which he has introduced an exemplification of the principles of Christianity, in the early sufferings of the primitive church, and enriched the narrative by the splendid description of the scenery in Egypt, Greece, and Palestine, which he had visited during his pilgrimage to Jerusalem, and all the stores of learning which a life spent in classical and ecclesiastical lore could accumulate. The last of his considerable publications is the *Etudes Historiques*, a work eminently characteristic of that superiority in historical composition, which we have allowed to the French modern writers over their contemporaries in this country; and which, we fear, another generation, instructed when too late by the blood and the tears of a Revolution, will alone be able fully to appreciate. Its object is to trace the influence of Christianity from its first spread in the Roman empire to the rise of civilisation in the Western world; a field in which he goes over the ground trod by Gibbon, and demonstrates the unbounded benefits derived from religion in all the institutions of modern times. In this noble undertaking he has been aided, with a still more philosophical mind, though inferior fire and eloquence, by Guizot—a writer who, equally with his illustrious rival, is as yet unknown, save by report, in this country, but from whose joint labours is to be dated the spring of a pure and philosophical system of religious inquiry in France, and the commencement of that revival of manly devotion in which the antidote, and the only antidote, to the fanaticism of infidelity is to be found.

VIRGIL, TASSO, AND RAPHAEL

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Originality of conception and fidelity of observation in general mark the efforts of genius in the earlier ages of society; and it is then, accordingly, that those creative minds appear which stamp their own impress upon the character of a whole people, and communicate to their literature, in the most distant periods, a certain train of thought, a certain class of images, a certain family resemblance. Homer, Phidias, and Æschylus in ancient times; Dante, Michael Angelo, Ariosto, and Shakspeare in modern, belong to this exalted class. Each, in his own department, has struck out a new range of thought, and created a fresh brood of ideas, which on "winged words" have taken their flight to distant regions, and to the end of the world will never cease to delight and influence mankind. Subsequent ages may refine their images, expand their sentiments, perhaps improve their expression; but they add little to the stock of their conceptions. The very greatness of their predecessors precludes fresh creations: the furrows of the ancient wheels are so deep that the modern chariot cannot avoid falling into them. So completely, in all persons of education, are the great works of antiquity incorporated with thought, that they arise involuntarily with every exercise of the faculty of taste, and insensibly recur to the cultivated mind, with all that it admires, and loves, and venerates in the world.

But though originality of conception, the creation of imagery, and the invention of events belong to early ages, delicacy of taste, refinement of sentiment, perfection of expression, are the growth of a more advanced period of

society. The characters which are delineated by the hand of Genius in early times, are those bold and original ones in which the features are distinctly marked, the lines clearly drawn, the peculiarities strongly brought out. The images which are adopted are those which have first occurred to the creative mind in forming a world of fancy; the similes employed, those which convey to the simple and unlettered mind the clearest or most vivid conception of the idea or event intended to be illustrated. Valour, pride, resolution, tenderness, patriotism, are the mental qualities which are there portrayed in imaginary characters, and called forth by fictitious events: and it is this first and noblest delineation of mental qualities in a historical gallery which has rendered the *Iliad* immortal. The images and similes of Homer are drawn from a close observation of nature, but they are not very varied in their range: he paints every incident, every occurrence, every feature, but he is not much diversified in conception, and surprisingly identical in expression. His similes of a boar beset by hunters, of a lion prowling round a fold and repelled by the spear of the shepherd, of a panther leaping into a herd of cattle, of a mountain torrent bearing all before it in its furious descent, are represented in the same words wherever he has a close fight of one of his heroes with a multitude of enemies to recount, or the fell swoop of victorious onset to portray. So forcibly is the creative mind, in the first instance, fascinated by the variety and brilliancy of its conceptions, that it neglects and despises their subordinate details. It is careless of expression, because it is intent on ideas: it is niggardly in language, because it is prodigal of thought. Homer's expressions or epithets are, in general, admirably chosen, and speak at once a graphic eye and an imaginative mind; but it is extraordinary how often they recur without any variation. It is the same with Ariosto: he is somewhat more varied in his expression, but even more identical in his details. Prodigal of invention, varied in imagination, unbounded in conception, in the incidents and great features of his story, he has very little diversity in its subordinate parts. He carries us over the whole earth, through the air, and to the moon: but giants, castles, knights, and errant damsels, occur at every step, with hardly any alteration. The perpetual jousts of

the knights, charging with the lance and then drawing the sword, are exactly parallel to the endless throwing of the spear and leaping from the chariot in the *Iliad.*

No man can read the *Æneid* without seeing that it has been constructed, both in its general conception and chief incidents, on the poems of Homer; and yet so exquisite was the taste, so refined the sentiment, so tender the heart of VIRGIL, that he has produced upon the world the impression of a great original author, and his fame is second only to the immortal author of the *Iliad.* Dante worshipped him as a species of divinity; he made him his guide through the infernal regions, to unfold the crimes of the wicked, and the intentions of the Deity in the distribution of future rewards and punishments. Throughout the Middle Ages he was regarded as a sort of necromancer, a mighty magician, to whom the past and the future were alike known, and whose power even the elements of nature were constrained to obey. The "Sortes Virgillianæ," so well known and so long practised in every country of Europe, arose from this belief. The imagery, mythology, and characters of his epic poem are drawn from the *Iliad;* but in two particulars he is entirely original, and his genius has opened the two fountains from which the most prolific streams of beauty in modern poetry have flowed. He is the father of *descriptive* and *amatory* poetry. The passion of love, as we understand it, was unknown to Homer, as much as was the description of nature as a separate and substantive object. He has made the whole *Iliad,* indeed, turn upon the wrath of Achilles for the loss of Briseïs; and he has painted, with inimitable tenderness and pathos, the conjugal attachment of Hector and Andromache; but he had no conception of love as a passion, mingled with sentiment and independent of possession. The wrath of Achilles is the fury of an Eastern sultan whose harem has been violated: the parting of Hector and Andromache is the rending asunder of the *domestic* affections, the farewell from the family hearth, the breaking up of the home circle. But the love of Dido for Æneas is the refined passion which is the soul of the romances and of half the poetry of modern times. It was the creature of the imagination, the offspring of the soul from its own conceptions, kindled only into life by an external object. It arose

from mental admiration ; it was inhaled more by the ear than the eye ; it was warmed at his recital of the sack of Troy, and the subsequent wanderings of its exiled hero over the melancholy main. It had no resemblance to the seducing voluptuousness of Ovid, any more than the elegant indecencies of Catullus. It resembled the passion of Desdemona for Othello, the devotion of Corinne to Oswald.

Homer painted with graphic fidelity and incomparable force, often with extraordinary beauty, the appearances of nature ; but it was as illustrations, or for the purpose of similitude only that he did so. It was on human events that his thoughts were fixed : it was the human heart, in all its various forms and changes, that he sought to depict. But Virgil was the high-priest of nature, and he worshipped her with all a poet's fervour. He identifies himself with rural life ; he describes with devout enthusiasm its joys, its occupations, its hardships : the rocks, the woods, the streams, awaken his ardent admiration ; the animals and insects are the objects of his tender solicitude. When the Mantuan bard wrote,—

————"Sæpe exiguus mus
Sub terram posuit domos atque horrea fecit,"*

he was inspired with the same spirit that afterwards animated Burns when he contemplated the daisy, Cowper when he sympathised with the hare. The descriptive poetry of modern times has owed much to his exquisite eye and sensitive heart. Thomson, in his *Seasons*, has expanded the theme in a kindred spirit, and with prodigal magnificence. Scott and Byron have brought that branch of the poetic art to the highest perfection, by blending it with the moral affections, with the picturesque imagery of the olden time, with the magic of Eastern or classical association. But none of our poets, how great soever their genius, how varied their materials, have exceeded, if they have equalled, the exquisite beauty of his descriptions ; and the purest taste in observation, as the utmost beauty of expression, is still to be best attained by studying, night and day, the poems of Virgil.

Modern epic poetry arose in a different age, and was

* ————"Oft a little mouse
Beneath the earth its home hath made,
And spread its stores."

moulded by different circumstances. The mythology of antiquity was at an end, and with it had perished the gay and varied worship which had so long amused or excited an imaginative people. The empire of the Cæsars, with its grandeur and its recollections, had sunk into the dust; the venerable letters, S. P. Q. R., no longer commanded the veneration save of the lettered part of mankind. A new faith, enjoining moral duties, had descended upon the earth: a holier spirit had come to pervade the breasts of the faithful. An unknown race of fierce barbarians had broken into the decaying provinces of the Roman empire, and swept away their government, their laws, their property, and their institutions. But the Christian faith had proved more powerful than the arms of the legions; it alone had survived amidst the general wreck of the civilised world.

Mingling with the ardent feelings and fierce energy of the barbarian victors, it sat

> ———"a blooming bride
> By valour's arm'd and awful side."

Incorporating itself with the very souls of the conquerors —descending on their heads with the waters of baptism, never leaving them till the moment of extreme unction—it moulded between these two extremes their whole character. A new principle superior to all earthly power was introduced —a paramount authority established, to which even the arm of victorious conquest was compelled to submit—ruthless warriors were seen kneeling at the feet of unarmed pontiffs. The crown of the Cæsars had more than once been lowered before the cross of the Head of the faithful.

From the intensity and universality of these religious emotions, and the circumstance of the Holy Land being in the hands of the Saracens, with whom Christendom had maintained so long, and at times so doubtful, a strugggle, a new passion had seized upon the people of modern Europe, to which no parallel is to be found in the previous or subsequent history of mankind. The desire to recover the Holy Sepulchre, and reopen it to the pilgrimages of the faithful, had come to inflame the minds of men with such vehemence, that nothing approaching to it had ever before occurred in the world. It had pervaded alike the great and the humble, the learned and the ignorant, the prince and the peasant.

It had torn up whole nations from Europe, and precipitated them on Asia. It had caused myriads of armed men to cross the Hellespont. In Asia Minor, on the theatre of the contest of the Greeks and Trojans, it had brought vast armies into collision, far outnumbering the hosts led by Hector and Agamemnon. It had brought them together in a holier cause, and from more elevated motives, than prompted the Greek confederates to range themselves under the King of Men. It had impelled Richard Cœur-de-Lion and Godfrey of Bouillon from Europe. It had roused Saladin and Solyman the Magnificent in Asia. Unlike other popular passions, it had continued through successive generations. It had survived for centuries, and declined at length less from want of ardour in the cause than from failure of the physical and material resources to maintain at so vast a distance so wasting a struggle, and supply the places of the multitudes of the faithful whose bones whitened the valley of the Danube or the sands of Asia.

But religious and devout emotions had not alone become all-powerful from the blending of the ardour of a spiritual faith with the fierce energy of northern conquests. The northern nations had brought with them from their woods two principles unknown to the most civilised nations of antiquity. Tacitus has recorded that a nation in Germany maintained its authority solely by the justice of its decisions; and that in all the tribes women were held in the highest respect, and frequently swayed the public councils on the most momentous occasions. It is in these two principles, the love of justice and respect for women, that the foundation was laid for the *manners of chivalry*, which form the grand characteristic and most ennobling feature of modern times. New elements were thence infused into the breast of the warriors, into the heart of women, into the songs of poetry. Chivalry had arisen with its dreams, its imaginations, its fantasy ; but, at the same time, with its elevation, its disinterestedness, its magnanimity. The songs of the Troubadours had been heard in southern Europe ; the courts of love had been held in Provence ; the exploits of Charlemagne and Richard had resounded throughout the world. The *chevalier sans peur et sans reproche*, who dedicated himself to the service of God and of his lady, was

a less natural, but he was a far more elevated being, than either Achilles or Æneas. Knights-errant, who went about in quest of adventures, redressing wrongs, succouring damsels, combating giants, defying sorcerers, delivering captives —faithful amidst every temptation to their lady-love, true amidst every danger to the Pole-star of duty—formed the leading characters in a species of romance, which is less likely, in all probability, to be durable in fame than the *Iliad* or the *Æneid;* but which is so, in a great degree, from the circumstance that the characters it portrays had, from an extraordinary combination of events, been strung upon a higher key than is likely to be sympathised with by future generations of man.

Ariosto was the great original mind in this extravagant but yet noble style of poetry; he was the Homer of this romance of modern Europe. He possessed the same fruitful invention, the same diversified conception, the same inexhaustible fancy as the Grecian bard; and in melody and occasional beauty of versification, he is often his superior. But he will bear no sort of comparison with Homer in knowledge of character or the delineation of the human heart. His heroes are almost all cast in one of two models, and bear one of two images and superscriptions. The Christian paladins are all gentle, true, devoted, magnanimous, unconquerable; the Saracen soldans haughty, cruel, perfidious, irascible, but desperately powerful in combat. No shades of difference and infinite diversity in character demonstrate, as in the *Iliad*, a profound knowledge and accurate observation of the human heart. No fierce and irascible Achilles disturbs the sympathy of the reader with the conquerors; no self-forgetting and country-devoted Hector enlists our sympathies on the side of the vanquished. His imagination, like the winged steed of Astolfo, flies away with his judgment; it bears him to the uttermost parts of the earth, to the palace of the syren Alcina, to the halls in the moon; but it destroys all unity or identity of interest in the poem. The famous siege of Paris by the Saracens in the time of Charlemagne, which was so often expected during the Middle Ages that it at last came to be believed to have been real, was the main point of his story; but he diverges from it so often, in search of adventures with par-

ticular knights, that we wellnigh forget the principal object of the poem, and feel no absorbing interest in the issue of any particular events, or the exploits of any particular heroes. He had no great moral to unfold, or single interest to sustain, in his composition. His object was to amuse, not to instruct—to fascinate, not to improve. He is often as beautiful as Virgil in his descriptions, as lofty as Homer in his conceptions; but he as often equals Ovid in the questionable character of his adventures, or Catullus in the seducing warmth of his descriptions. There is no more amusing companion than the *Orlando Furioso* for the fireside; but there is none less likely to produce the ardent devotion, the forgetfulness of self, which are necessary to create the heroes whom it is his object to portray.

That which Ariosto wants, TASSO has. The *Jerusalem Delivered* is, beyond all question, the epic poem of modern Europe. In it, as in the *Iliad*, unity of interest and of action is entirely preserved. It is one great struggle between Europe and Asia which is recorded; it is for the attack and defence of one city that the forces of Christendom and of Mahometanism are arrayed. But the object of contention, the moral character of the struggle, is incomparably higher in the modern than the ancient poem. It is not "another Helen who has fired another Troy;" it is no confederacy of valour, thirsting for the spoils of opulence, which is contending for victory. It is the pilgrim, not the host, whose wrongs have now roused Europe into action; it is not to ravish beauty from its seducer, but the Holy Sepulchre from its profaners, that Christendom has risen in arms. The characters of the chiefs correspond to the superior sanctity of their cause, and indicate the mighty step in advance which the human mind, under the influence of Christianity and civilisation, had made since the days of Homer. In Godfrey of Bouillon we perceive enthusiasm guided by wisdom, difficulties overcome by resolution, self subdued by devotion. Rinaldo, like Achilles, is led astray by beauty, and the issue of the war is prolonged from the want of his resistless arm; but the difference between his passion for Armida, and the Grecian hero's wrath for the loss of Briseïs, marks the influence of the refined gallantry of modern times. The exquisite episode of the flight of Erminia, the matchless

pathos of the death of Clorinda, can be compared to nothing either in the *Iliad* or *Æneid;* they belong to the age of chivalry, and are the efflorescence of that strange but lofty aspiration of the human mind. Above all, there is a moral grandeur in the poem, a continued unity of interest, owing to a sustained elevation of purpose—a forgetfulness of self in the great cause of rescuing the Holy Sepulchre, which throws an air of sanctity around its beauties, and renders it the worthy epic of Europe in its noblest aspect.

Notwithstanding these inimitable beauties, the *Jerusalem Delivered* never has made, and never will make, the impression on the world which the *Iliad* has done. The reason is, that it is not equally drawn from nature. The characters are taken from romantic conception, not real life. The chiefs who assemble in council with Godfrey, the knights who strive before Jerusalem with Tancred, have little resemblance either to the greyhaired senators who direct human councils, or the youthful warriors who head actual armies. They are poetical abstractions, not living men. We read their speeches with interest, we contemplate their actions with admiration ; but it never occurs to us that we have seen such characters, or that the imagination of the poet has conceived anything resembling the occurrences of real life. The whole is a fairy dream—charming, interesting, delightful, but still a dream. It bears the same resemblance to reality which the brilliant gossamer of a snow-clad forest, glittering in the morning sun, does to the boughs when clothed with the riches and varied by the hues of summer. It is the perfection of our conceptions of chivalry, mingled with the picturesque machinery of antiquity and romantic imagery of the East, told with the exquisite beauty of European versification. But it is a poetical conception only, not a delineation of real life. In Homer, again, the marvellous power of the poet consists in his deep insight into human character, his perfect knowledge of the human heart, and his inimitable fidelity of drawing every object, animate or inanimate. Aristotle said that he excelled all poets that ever appeared in "διαγνοια." Aristotle was right ; no one can study the *Iliad* without feeling the justice of the observation. It is the penetration, the piercing insight of the Greek bard in a manner through the breast, which

constitute his passport to immortality. Other poets may equal him in variety of imagination; some may excel him in melody of versification or beauty of language: none will probably ever approach him in delineation of character, or clothing abstract conceptions in the flesh and blood of real life.

Considered with reference to unity of action and identity of interest, the *Jerusalem Delivered*, equal to the *Iliad*, is much superior to the *Æneid*. Virgil appears, in his admiration of Homer, to have aimed at uniting in his poem the beauties both of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, and thence in a great measure his failure to rival either. While the first six books, which contain the wanderings of the Trojan exile and the dismal recital of the sack of Troy, are an evident imitation of the *Odyssey*, the last six, containing the strife in Italy, the efforts of the Trojans to gain a footing on the Ausonian shores, and the concluding single combat of Turnus and Æneas, are as evidently framed upon the model of the *Iliad*. But it is impossible in this manner to tack together two separate poems, and form a homogeneous whole from their junction. Patchwork appears in spite of all the genius and taste of Virgil. Epic poetry, indeed, is not confined within the narrow limits of the Grecian drama; the poem may embrace a longer period than it requires to read it. But in epic poetry, as in all the fine arts, one unity is indispensable—the unity of interest or emotion. Unity of time and place is not to be disregarded to any great degree without manifest danger. The whole period embraced in the *Iliad* is only forty-eight days, and the interest of the piece—that which elapses from Hector lighting his fires before the Greek intrenchments till his death in front of the Scæan Gate—is only thirty-six hours. Tasso has the same unity of time, place, and interest in his poems: the scene is always around Jerusalem; the time not many weeks; the main object, the centre of the whole action, the capture of the city. The episodes of Erminia's flight and Armida's island are felt to be episodes only: they vary the narrative without distracting the interest. But in Virgil the interest is various and complicated, the scene continually shifting, the episodes usurp the place of the main story. At one time we are fascinated by the awful recital of the murder of Priam, the burning of Troy, and the flight of Æneas: at

another, we weep with the sorrows of Dido at Carthage, and the exquisite pathos of her heart-rending lamentations: at a third, we are charmed by the descent into the infernal regions on the shores of Avernus—we sympathise with the patriotic effort of Turnus and the people of Ausonia to expel the invaders from the Italian shores. Though Virgil did not intend it, he has twice transferred the reader's sympathy from the hero of his story: once by his inimitable description of the mourning and death of Dido from the departure and perfidy of Æneas, and again, from the burst of patriotic feeling which he has represented as animating the Etruscan tribes at the violent intrusion of the Trojan invaders.

Virgil's heroes will bear no sort of comparison with those either of the *Iliad* or the *Jerusalem Delivered*. Æneas himself is a vain conceited man, proud of his piety and his wanderings, and destroying our admiration for either by the ostentation with which he brings them forward on all occasions. The well-known line,

"Sum pius Æneas, famâ super æthere notus,"*

occurs too frequently to render it possible to take any interest in such a self-applauding character. Compare this with the patriotic devotion, the heroic courage, the domestic tenderness, the oblivion of self in Hector, in the *Iliad*, and it will at once appear how far deeper the insight into the human heart was in the Grecian than the Roman poet. One striking instance will at once illustrate this. When Hector parts from Andromache at the Scæan Gate, and after he has taken his infant son from her arms, he prays to Jupiter that he may become so celebrated that the people in seeing himself pass, may say only—"He far exceeds his father." What a sentiment on the part of a hero himself, and at the moment the bulwark and sole stay of Troy! But what does Virgil make Æneas say in similar circumstances?—"Learn, boy, virtue and true labour from ME, fortune from others."

What a difference between the thought in the two poets, and the interest which their words excite in the breast of the reader!

* "I am the pious Æneas, known by fame above the skies."

What a historical gallery, or rather what a gallery of imaginary portraits, does the *Iliad* contain! It is the embodying so many separate and well-distinguished characters in different persons which forms the grand characteristic, the unequalled supremacy of the poem. Only think of what they are. Achilles, vehement alike in anger and in grief—wrathful, impetuous, overbearing—"the most terrible character ever conceived by man," yet not insensible at times to the tender emotions; loving his country, weeping for his father, devoted to his home, but yet determined to purchase deathless renown by a short life, ere he met the death he knew awaited him under the walls of Troy. Hector, calm, resolute, patriotic; sustaining by his single arm the conflict with a host of heroes; retaining, by his single suavity, the confederacy of many jealous and discordant nations; unconquerable in the field, undaunted in council; ever watching over his country, ever forgetful of himself; overflowing with domestic affection, yet prodigal of self-sacrifice; singly awaiting, before the Scæan Gate, the approach of Achilles, when his celestial armour shone like the setting sun, and all Troy in terror had sought refuge within the walls; deaf to the wailing even of Andromache and Priam, at the call of patriotic duty; and when betrayed by Minerva in the last conflict, and deprived of his home, yet drawing his sword to do deeds of which men might speak thereafter! Diomede, unsubdued even amidst the wreck of Grecian fortunes during the absence of Achilles, alone sustaining the war when all around him quailed before the spear of Hector; and resolute to hold his ground with a few followers, even though the whole of the Grecian leaders fled in their ships. Agamemnon, proud, imperious, passionate; doing injustice in anger, yet willing to repair it on reflection; wresting the blue-eyed maid from Achilles in the first burst of fury, yet publicly acknowledging his fault in the council of the chiefs; sending embassies, and offering his own daughter, to obtain a reconciliation with the son of Peleus. Ulysses, wary alike in council and in action; provident in forming designs, intrepid in carrying them into execution; sparing of the blood of his soldiers, but unconquerable in the resolution with which they were led; ever counselling prudent measures, but ever ruled by invincible

determination. Ajax, singly resisting the onset of the Trojan multitude; slowly retreating, covered by his broad shield, midway between the two armies, when all around him fled; striving with desperate resolution for the body of Patroclus, and covering the retreat of his followers, who dragged along the lifeless hero, when Hector, clad in the shining panoply he had wrested from the Myrmidonian chief, was thundering in close pursuit. What has Virgil to exhibit as a set-off to this band of heroes—"fortem Gyan, fortemque Cloanthum,"—the boyish eagerness of Ascanius, the savage wrath of Turnus when bereaved of his bride! We seem, in passing from the *Iliad* to the *Æneid*, to have fallen, so far as character goes, from a race of giants to a brood of pigmies.

Modern partiality cannot claim for Tasso the merit of having conceived a band of heroes whose characters were as strongly marked, or boldly drawn, as those of the Grecian bard; yet may it justly claim for the Italian poet the second honours. Tasso did not draw his characters from nature, like Homer; he lived at a period when the manners of the heroic age had passed away, and the recollections of it were preserved only in the stanzas of poetry and the romances of the Troubadours; yet did the force of his genius, the elevation of his sentiments, the loftiness of his conceptions, in a great measure supply the defect, and produce a magnificent, and to this day unequalled, picture of the chivalry of modern Europe. Godfrey of Bouillon is the model of a Christian hero whose arm has been devoted to the sacred lance; antiquity did not, and could not, conceive any such character. Hector is the nearest approach to it; but the patriotism of the Trojan chief is mingled with his domestic affections: it is for his father, his wife, his child, his hearth, his country, that he fights. In Godfrey, all these affections, warm and ennobling as they are, appear to be obliterated by the perpetual sense of a sacred duty superior to them all—by the intensity of the pious fervour which had concentrated all earthly affections. He is the personification of the Church militant combating for its Saviour's cause. The profound feelings, the self-negation, the martyr-like spirit which had been nursed for centuries amidst the solitude of the cloister, appears in him brought forth into

action, and producing the most intense enthusiasm, yet regulated by the caution of Ulysses, combined with the foresight of Agamemnon, sustained by the constancy of Ajax.

Rinaldo, youthful, vehement, impassioned, is the ideal of a hero not yet weaned from the passions of the world. Vehement, capricious, and irascible, he disturbs, like Achilles, the council of the chiefs by his wrath, and is seduced by the beauty of Armida to abandon the cause of the Cross; yet even in her enchanted gardens, and when surrounded by all that can fascinate the imagination and allure the senses, the sparks of a noble nature are not extinct in his breast. He is recalled to his duty by the sight of her warriors; he flies the arms of the syren, he penetrates with invincible courage the enchanted forest; and when he descends, purified from the stains of the world, from the lofty mountain on whose summit at sunrise he had dedicated himself to God, he is the worthy and invincible champion of the Cross. Not less bold than his youthful rival, not less enthusiastic in his affections, Tancredi is the victim of a romantic passion. But it is no enchantress for whom he pines, it is no seducing frail one who allures him from the path of duty. Clorinda appears in the Saracen ranks; her arms combat with heroic power for the cause of Mahomet; the glance which has fascinated the Christian knight came from beneath the plumed helmet. Lofty enthusiasm has unstrung his arm, devoted tenderness has subdued his heart, the passion of love in its purest form has fascinated his soul. Yet even this high-toned sentiment can yield to the influences of religion; and when Tancredi, after the fatal nocturnal conflict in which his sword pierced the bosom of his beloved, is visited by her in his dreams, and assured that she awaits him in Paradise, the soul of the Crusader is aroused within him, and he sets forward with ardent zeal to seek danger and death in the breach of Jerusalem. It cannot be said that these characters are so natural as those of Homer, at least they are not so similar to what is elsewhere seen in the world, and therefore they will never make the general impression which the heroes of the *Iliad* have done. But they are more refined, they are more exalted; and if less like what men are, they are perhaps more like what they ought to be.

How is it, then, if Virgil is so inferior to Homer and

Tasso in the unity of action, the concentration of interest, and the delineation of character, that he has acquired his prodigious reputation among men? How is it that generation after generation has ratified the opinion of Dante, who called him his "Divine Master"—of Petrarch, who spent his life in the study of his works? How is it that his verses are so engraven in our recollection that they have become, as it were, a second nature to every cultivated mind, and insensibly recur whenever the beauty of poetry is felt, or the charms of nature experienced? Rest assured the judgment of so many ages is right: successive generations and different nations never concur in praising any author, unless his works, in some respects at least, have approached perfection. If we cannot discern the beauties, the conclusion to be drawn is, that our taste is defective, rather than that so many ages and generations have concurred in lavishing their admiration on an unworthy object. Nor is it difficult to see in what the excellence of Virgil consists. We cannot read a page of him without perceiving what has fascinated the world, without concurring in the fascination. It is the tenderness of his heart, his exquisite pathos, his eye for the beauty of nature, the unrivalled beauty of his language, which have given him immortality, and to the end of time will render the study of his works the most perfect means of refining the taste and inspiring a genuine feeling of poetic beauty.

So melodious is the versification, so delicate the taste, so exquisite the feeling, so refined the sentiment of Virgil, that it may be truly said that he will ever remain the model on which the graces of composition in every future age must be formed. Of him more truly than any human being it may be said, "Nihil quod tetegit non ornavit."* The *Georgics* demonstrate that, in the hands of genius, and under the guidance of taste, the most ordinary occupations of rural life may be treated with delicacy, and rendered prolific of beauty. The dressing of vines, the subduing of the clod by the sturdy heifers, the different manures for the soil, the sowing of seed, the reaping of harvest, the joys of the vintage, the vehemence of storms, the snows of winter, the heats of summer, the blossoms of spring, the riches of

* "Naught has he touched and not adorned."

autumn, become in his hands prolific of description and prodigal of beauty. Even the dumb animals are the objects of his tender solicitude. We hear the heifers lowing for their accustomed meal in winter; we gaze on the sporting of the lambs in spring; we see the mountain goat suspended from the shaggy rock in summer; we sympathise with the provident industry of the bees; we even feel we have a friend in the little underground nest of the field-mouse. The opening lines of the Eclogues, which every schoolboy knows by heart, give an earnest of the exquisite taste which pervades his writings:—

"Tityre, tu patulæ recubans sub tegmine fagi,
Sylvestrem tenui musam meditaris avenâ;
Nos patriæ fines et dulcia linquimus arva,
Nos patriam fugimus: tu, Tityre, lentus in umbrâ,
Formosam resonare doces Amaryllida sylvas."

Virgil, it has been said, was so strongly impressed with the inferiority of the *Æneid* to what he conceived epic poetry should be, that he desired that poem to be thrown into the flames after his death; yet though deficient in the principal requisites of an epic poem, so far as the structure of the story and the delineation of the characters are concerned, what exquisite beauties does it contain—what an assemblage of lovely images has it brought together—what an irreparable loss would its destruction have been to all future generations of men! Not all the genius of subsequent ages could have supplied its place. There are beauties in the *Æneid*, which neither Thomson in descriptive, nor Racine in dramatic poetry, have been able to rival.

If Homer excels all subsequent writers in conception of character, vigour of imagination, and graphic delineation, Virgil is not less unrivalled in delicacy of sentiment, tenderness of feeling, and beauty of expression. There are many more striking scenes in the *Iliad*, more animating events, more awful apparitions; but in the *Æneid*, passages of extraordinary beauty are much more numerous. What is present to the imagination when we rise from the former, is the extraordinary series of brilliant or majestic images which it has presented; what is engraven on the memory when we conclude the latter, is the charming series of beautiful passages which it contains. There are many more

events to recollect in the Grecian, but more lines to remember in the Roman poet. To the *Iliad*, subsequent ages have turned with one accord for images of heroism, traits of nature, grandeur of character. To the *Æneid*, subsequent times will ever have recourse for touches of pathos, expressions of tenderness, felicity of language. Flaxman drew his conception of heroic sculpture from the heroes of the *Iliad:* Racine borrowed his heart-rending pathetic from the sorrows of Dido. Homer struck out his conceptions with the bold hand, and in the gigantic proportions, of Michael Angelo's frescoes: Virgil finished his pictures with the exquisite grace of Raphael's Madonnas.

To illustrate the different character of the Roman and Italian poet, we subjoin two passages, perhaps the finest that antiquity and modern times have produced, descriptive of the most heart-rending scenes of pathos which the human mind can figure.

" At trepida et cœptis immanibus effera Dido,
Sanguineam volvens aciem, maculisque trementes
Interfusa genas, et pallida morte futurâ,
Interiora domûs irrumpit limina, et altos
Conscendit furibunda rogos, ensemque recludit
Dardanium, non hos quæsitum munus in usus.
Hîc postquam Iliacas vestes notumque cubile
Conspexit, paullùm lacrymis et mente morata,
Incubuitque toro, dixitque novissima verba:
' Dulces exuviæ, dum fata Deusque sinebant!
Accipite hanc animam, meque his exsolvite curis.
Vixi, et quem dederat cursum fortuna, peregi:
Et nunc magna mei sub terras ibit imago.
Urbem præclaram statui: mea mœnia vidi:
Ulta virum, pœnas inimico à fratre recepi:
Felix, heu nimiùm felix! si litora tantùm
Nunquam Dardaniæ tetigissent nostra carinæ.'
Dixit: et, os impressa toro, ' Moriemur inultæ?
Sed moriamur,' ait: ' sic, sic juvat ire sub umbras.
Hauriat hunc oculis ignem crudelis ab alto
Dardanus, et nostræ secum ferat omina mortis.'
Dixerat: atque illam media inter talia ferro
Collapsam aspiciunt comites, ensemque cruore
Spumantem, sparsasque manus."

Æneid, iv. 642-665.

" Then swiftly to the fatal place she passed,
And mounts the funeral pile with furious haste,
Unsheathes the sword the Trojan left behind,
(Not for so dire an enterprise designed.)
But when she viewed the garments loosely spread,
Which once he wore, and saw the conscious bed,
She paused, and with a sigh the robes embraced;
Then on the couch her trembling body cast,
Repressed the ready tears, and spoke her last:

'Dear pledges of my love, while heaven so pleased!
Receive a soul of mortal anguish eased;
My fatal course is finished; and I go,
A glorious name, among the ghosts below.
A lofty city by my hands is raised;
Pygmalion punished, and my lord appeased.
What could my fortune have afforded more,
Had the false Trojan never touched my shore?'
Then kissed the couch. 'And must I die,' she said,
'And unrevenged?—'Tis doubly to be dead!
Yet e'en this death with pleasure I receive
On any terms—'tis better than to live.
These flames from far may the false Trojan view,
These boding omens his base flight pursue!'
She said, and struck: deep entered in her side
The piercing steel, with reeking purple dyed:
Clogged in the wound the cruel weapon stands;
The spouting blood came streaming on her hands."

DRYDEN'S *Virgil.*

It is difficult to figure poetry more beautiful than this; although Dryden's translation gives no sort of idea of the exquisite pathos of the original. But Tasso has reached a much higher flight in the well-known passage describing the death of Clorinda, which is perhaps the most exquisite gem of modern poetry.

" Ma ecco omai l' ora fatale è giunta,
Che 'l viver di Clorinda al suo fin deve.
Spinge egli il ferro nel bel sen di punta,
Che vi s' immerge, e'l sangue avido beve;
E la veste, che d' or vago trapunta
Le mammelle stringea tenera e leve,
L'empie d' un caldo fiume. Elle già sente
Morirsi, e 'l piè le manca egro e languente.

" Quel segue la vittoria, e la trafitta
Vergine minacciando incalza e preme.
Ella mentre cadea, la voce afflitta
Movendo, disse le parole estreme;
Parole ch' a lei novo un spirito ditta,
Spirto di fe, di carità, di speme:
Virtù ch' or Dio le infonde; e se rubella
In vita fu, la vuole in morte ancella:

" Amico, hai vinto: io ti perdon—perdona
Tu ancora, al corpo no, che nulla pave;
All' alma sì: deh per lei prega; e dona
Battesmo a me, ch' ogni mia colpa lave.
In queste voci languide risuona
Un non so che di flebile e soave,
Ch' al cor gli serpe, ed ogni sdegno ammorza,
E gli occhi a lagrimar gl' invoglia e sforza.

" Poco quindi lontan nel sen del monte
Scaturia mormorando un picciol rio;
Egli v' accorse, e l' elmo empiè nel fonte,
E tornò mesto al grande ufficio e pio.
Tremar sentì la man, mentre la fronte
Non conosciuta ancor sciolse e scoprio.

La vide, e la conobbe ; e restò senza
E voce e moto. Ahi vista ! ahi conoscenza !

" Non morì già ; che sue virtuti accolse
Tutte in quel punto, e in guardia al cor le mise ;
E premendo il suo affanno, a dar si volse
Vita con l' acqua a chi col ferro uccise.
Mentre egli il suon de' sacri detti sciolse,
Colei di gioja trasmutossi, e rise :
E in atto di morir lieto e vivace,
Dir parea : s' apre il Cielo ; io vado in pace.

" D' un bel pallore ha il bianco volto asperso,
Come a gigli sarian miste viole ;
E gli occhi al cielo affisa, e in lei converso
Sembra per la pietate il cielo e 'l sole ;
E la man nuda e fredda alzando verso
Il cavaliero, in vece di parole,
Gli dà pegno di pace. In questa forma
Passa la bella donna, e par che dorma."

Gerus. Lib. xii. 64-69.

" But now, alas ! the fatal hour arrives,
That her sweet life must leave that tender hold ;
His sword into her bosom deep he drives,
And bathed in lukewarm blood his iron cold ;
Between her breasts the cruel weapon rives
Her curious square, embossed with swelling gold ;
Her knees grow weak, the pains of death she feels,
And like a falling cedar bends and reels.

" The Prince his hand upon her shield doth stretch,
And low on earth the wounded damsel laith ;
And while she fell, with weak and woful speech,
Her prayers last and last complaints she saith.
A spirit new did her those prayers teach,
Spirit of hope, of charity, and faith ;
And though her life to Christ rebellious were,
Yet died she his child and handmaid dear.

" ' Friend, thou hast won ! I pardon thee, nor save
This body, that all torments can endure :
But save my soul : baptism I dying crave,
Come, wash away my sins with water pure.'
His heart relenting nigh in sunder rave,
With woful speech of that sweet creature,
So that his rage, his wrath, and anger died,
And on his cheeks salt tears for ruth down slide.

" With murmur loud, down from the mountain side
A little runnel tumbled near the place ;
Thither he ran, and filled his helmet wide,
And quick returned to do that work of grace.
With trembling hands her beaver he untied,
Which done, he saw, and seeing, knew her face :
And lost then with his speech and moving quite :
O woful knowledge ! ah unhappy sight !

" He died not, but all his strength unites,
And to his virtues gave his heart in guard :
Bridling his grief, with water he requites
The life that he bereft with iron hard :

And while the sacred words the knight recites,
The nymph to heaven with joy herself prepared;
And as her life decays her joys increase;
She smiled, and said, 'Farewell, I die in peace.'

" As violets blue 'mongst lilies pure men throw,
So paleness midst her native white begun.
Her looks to heaven she cast: their eyes, I trow,
Downward for pity bent both heaven and sun.
Her naked hand she gave the knight, in show
Of love and peace; her speech, alas! was done:
And thus the virgin fell on endless sleep.
Love, Beauty, Virtue, for your darling weep."

FAIRFAX'S *Tasso.*

It is impossible to conceive more exquisite passages than these—the very flower of ancient and modern poetry. Nothing can exceed the pathos and tenderness of Virgil's description; but how superior are the sentiments with which the Christian poet has clothed the dying moments of his heroine, to the utmost beauty which heathen imagination could conceive!

Virgil is the most charming descriptive poet of antiquity; but he has been exceeded in that which may be called his peculiar field by his successors in modern times. We select two of the finest descriptive passages, one from Virgil, and one from Thomson, to illustrate this observation.

" Est in secessu longo locus: insula portum
Efficit objectu laterum, quibus omnis ab alto
Frangitur, inque sinus scindit sese unda reductos.
Hinc atque hinc vastæ rupes, geminique minantur,
In cœlum scopuli: quorum sub vertice latè
Æquora tuta silent: tum sylvis scena coruscis
Desuper, horrentique atrum nemus imminet umbrâ.
Fronte sub adversâ scopulis pendentibus antrum:
Intus aquæ dulces, vivoque sedilia saxo;
Nympharum domus. Hic fessas non vincula naves
Ulla tenent: unco non alligat anchora morsu."

Æneid, i. 160.

" Within a long recess there lies a bay:
An island shades it from the rolling sea,
And forms a port secure for ships to ride:
Broke by the jutting land on either side,
In double streams the briny waters glide.
Betwixt two rows of rocks, a sylvan scene
Appears above, and groves for ever green:
A grot is formed beneath, with mossy seats
To rest the Nereids, and exclude the heats.
Down through the crannies of the living walls
The crystal streams descend in murmuring falls.
No hawsers need to bind the vessels here,
Nor bearded anchors."

DRYDEN'S *Virgil.*

Virgil's description is very beautiful, though Dryden's translation gives but a feeble idea of it. But how inferior it is to Thomson's description of sunrise in summer!

> "But yonder comes the powerful king of day,
> Rejoicing in the east. The lessening cloud,
> The kindling azure, and the mountain brow,
> Illumed with fluid gold, his near approach
> Betoken glad. Lo! now apparent, all
> Aslant the dew-bright earth and coloured air,
> He looks in boundless majesty abroad,
> And sheds the shining day, that burnished plays
> On rocks, and hills, and towers, and wandering streams,
> High gleaming from afar."
>
> THOMSON'S *Seasons*.

Virgil has been generally considered as unrivalled in the pathetic; but this observation requires to be taken with a certain limitation. No man ever exceeded Homer in the delineations of suffering, so far as he wished to portray it; but it was one branch only of that emotion that he cared to paint. It was the *domestic pathetic* that he delineated with such power: it was in the distresses of home life, the rending asunder of home affections, that he was so great a master. The grief of Andromache on the death of Hector, and the future fate of his son begging his bread from the cold charity of strangers—the wailings of Priam and Hecuba, when that noble chief awaited before the Scæan Gate the approach of Achilles—the passionate lamentation of the Grecian chief over the dead body of Patroclus—never were surpassed in any language; they abound with traits of nature which, to the end of the world, will fascinate and melt the human heart. The tender melancholy of Evander for the fate of Pallas, who had perished by the spear of Turnus, is of the same description, and will bear a comparison with its touching predecessor. But these are all the sorrows of domestic life. Virgil and Tasso, in the description of the despair consequent on the severing of the ties of the passion of love, have opened a new field, unknown in the previous poetry of antiquity. It is to be found touched on in the tragedies of Sophocles and Euripides, and but touched on. The passion they represent under the name of love was not what we understand by the word, or what constitutes so important an element in the poetry and romance of modern Europe. It was not the imaginative flame feeding on hope, nursed by smiles,

transcendant in enjoyment, but a furious mania, resembling rather, and classed by them with, the ravings of insanity. It was the passion, not the sentiment, which they felt and painted. Destiny was the grand ruling power in Greek tragedy: the distress brought out was the striving of man against the iron chain of fate. Love as a passion, independent of destiny, detached from sense, feeding on imagination, living in the presence of the beloved object, is glanced at in Catullus; but it is in Virgil that we must look for the perfect delineation of its suffering, a thorough knowledge of its nature—in Tasso, that it has been brought up to the highest conceivable perfection.

But, for all that, we will not have old Homer defrauded of his dues. The *Iliad* cannot, for the reasons already mentioned, produce passages to be placed beside the pathetic tenderness of Dido's love for Æneas, the romantic chivalry of Tancredi, or the self-forgetfulness of Erminia's passion. But in the earlier and more natural affections, in the delineation of domestic grief, in the rending asunder the parental or filial ties, who has ever surpassed the pathetic simplicity of the Grecian bard? Where can we find such heart-rending words as Priam addresses to Hector, leaning over the towers of Troy, when his heroic son was calmly awaiting the approach of the godlike Achilles, resplendent in the panoply of Vulcan, and shielded by the Ægis of Minerva?

But we know not whether three lines in the *Odyssey* do not convey a still more touching picture of grief—so powerful is the wail of untaught nature. When Proteus informed Menelaus of the murder of Agamemnon, his grief is thus described—

> "Ὣς ἔφατ'· αὐτὰρ ἔμοιγε κατεκλάσθη φίλον ἦτορ
> Κλαῖον δ' ἐν ψαμάθοισι καθήμενος· οὐδέ νύ μοι κῆρ
> Ἤθελ' ἔτι ζώειν, καὶ ὁρᾶν φάος ἠελίοιο."
>
> *Odyssey*, iv. 538.

"Thus he spoke. My soul was crushed within me; I sat weeping on the sand; nor had I the heart to wish to live, and behold the light of the sun." Here is the pathos of nature: "Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not."

One peculiar beauty belongs to the epic poems of anti-

quity, and especially to Homer, from the combination of heroic sentiments and actions with a simplicity which will be looked for in vain, and in truth would be unseemly, in the later ages of society. We hear of princes, kings, and the daughters of kings, and our imagination immediately clothes them with the pomp and circumstance of modern royalty. But ere long some little circumstance, let out as it were accidentally, brings us back at once to the simplicity and habits of early life. Bellerophon met the daughter of a king amidst the grassy meads, and a race of heroes sprung from this occasion ; but he met her as he was tending his herds, and she her lambs. The beauteous daughters of the Trojan chiefs repaired to the hot and cold springs of the Scamander, near the Scæan Gate, but they went there to wash their clothes in its limpid fountains. The youngest daughter of Nestor, with the innocence of a child, though in the beauty of womanhood, did, by her father's desire, to Telemachus the duties of the bath. Many a chief is described as rich ; but generally the riches consist in flocks and herds, in wrought brass or golden ornaments—not unfrequently in meadows and garden-stuffs. This beauty could not, from the superior age of the world, belong to Tasso. His soldans are arrayed in the pomp of Asiatic magnificence—his princes appear in the pride of feudal power—his princesses are surrounded with the homage of chivalrous devotion. Virgil has often the same exquisite traits of nature, the same refreshing return to the young world, in the *Æneid:* he dwells on those peeps into pastoral simplicity as Tacitus did on the virtue of the Germans in the corrupted days of Roman society, when "corrumpere et corrumpi seculum vocatur."* We may conceive the enchantment with which the Romans, when the Capitol was in all its splendour in the time of Augustus, read his charming description of its shaggy precipices in the days of Evander.

> "Hinc ad Tarpeiam sedem et Capitolia ducit,
> Aurea nunc, olim sylvestribus horrida dumis.
> Jam tum religio pavidos terrebat agrestes
> Dira loci ; jam tum sylvam saxumque tremebant.
> 'Hoc nemus, hunc,' inquit, 'frondoso vertice collem,
> Quis deus incertum est, habitat deus : Arcades ipsum
> Credunt se vidisse Jovem, cum sæpe nigrantem
> Ægida concuteret dextrâ nimbosque cieret.'

* "When to corrupt and be corrupted was styled the manners of the age."

. . . . . .
Talibus inter se dictis, ad tecta subibant
Pauperis Evandri, passimque armenta videbant
Romanoque foro et lautis mugire Carinis."

—*Æneid*, viii. 347.

" Thence to the steep Tarpeian rock he leads,
Now roofed with gold, then thatched with homely reeds;
A reverend fear (such superstition reigns
Among the rude) even then possessed the swains.
Some god they knew—what god they could not tell—
Did there amid the sacred horror dwell.
The Arcadians thought him Jove, and said they saw
The mighty Thunderer, with majestic awe,
Who shook his shield, and dealt his bolts around,
And scattered tempests on the teeming ground.
Discoursing thus together, they resort
Where poor Evander keeps his country court;
They viewed the ground of Rome's litigious hall,
Once oxen lowed where now the lawyers bawl."

—Dryden's *Virgil*, viii. 387.

What Homer was to Virgil, and Ariosto to Tasso, that Michael Angelo was to Raphael. Though both these illustrious men lived in the same age, yet the former was born nine years before the latter,* and he had attained to eminence while his younger rival was yet toiling in the obscurity of humble life. But it was his works which roused the genius of his immortal successor. It was the sight of the magnificent frescoes of Michael Angelo that first emancipated Raphael from the stiff and formal, though beautiful style of his master, Pietro Perugino, and showed him of what his noble art was susceptible. So great was the genius, so ardent the effort of the young aspirant, so rapid the progress of art in those days, when the genius of modern Europe, locked up during the long frost of the Middle Ages, burst forth with the vigour and beauty of a Canadian spring, that he had brought painting, which he had taken up in a state of infancy in the studio of Pietro Perugino, to its very highest point when he died, at the age of thirty-seven. Seventeen years, in Raphael's hands, sufficed to bring an art as great and difficult as poetry to absolute perfection! Subsequent ages, vainly as yet attempting to imitate, can never hope to surpass him. How vast must have been the genius, how capacious the thought, how intense the labour, of the man who could thus master and bring to its greatest

* Raphael was born in 1483, Michael Angelo in 1474.

beauty this difficult art, in a period so short as, to men even of superior parts and unwearied application, barely to gain the command of the pencil!

Modern painting, as it appears in the works of Michael Angelo, Raphael, and Titian, is an art as elevated in kind as the highest flights of the epic or tragic muse, and it has been brought to a perfection to be paralleled only by the greatest conceptions of Grecian statuary. If called upon to assign the arts which human genius had, since the beginning of the world, brought to absolute perfection, no one would hesitate to fix on Grecian sculpture and Italian painting. Imagination can conceive a more faultless poem than the *Iliad*, a more dignified series of characters than those of the *Æneid*, a more interesting epic than *Paradise Lost;* but it can figure nothing more perfect than the friezes of Phidias, or more heavenly than the *Holy Families* of Raphael. It is one of the most extraordinary and inexplicable facts recorded in the history of the human mind, that these two sister arts should both have been brought to perfection near each other, on the shores of the Mediterranean, in the lifetime of a single generation ; for the transition from the marbles of Ægina to those of the Parthenon, executed in the lifetime of Pericles, is as great as from the paintings of Pietro Perugino to those of Raphael, made in the lifetime of Leo X.

The sculpture of antiquity aimed chiefly, if not entirely, at the representation of a *single figure.* Even the procession on the frieze of the Parthenon is not sculpture : it is a series of isolated horsemen or figures passing. The group of Niobe and her children is the only attempt extant at telling a story, or representing emotion, by a variety of figures. Within this limited range, the great sculptors carried the art to the highest imaginable perfection. The Apollo is the most perfect representation of manly beauty, the Venus of feminine grace and delicacy, that ever yet was conceived by the human mind. The Laocoon exhibits the most fearful contortions and agonised expressions of pain and anguish in suffering humanity ; the Fighting Gladiator, the most inimitable representation of warlike energy at its extreme tension—the Dying Warrior of the Capitol, of valour sinking beneath the ebbing stream of blood. The Hercules

Farnese is the perfection of physical strength ; the Jupiter Tonans of awful majesty, the Venus Calipyge of alluring beauty. Thus the expression of *character* was their great object ; emotion was not overlooked, but it was studied only as it brought out or illustrated the permanent temper of mind. A collection of ancient statues is a vast imaginary gallery, in which, as in the heroes of the *Iliad*, every conceivable gradation of the human mind is exhibited, from the stern vengeance of Achilles, whom not even the massacre of half the Grecian host could melt, to the tender heart of Andromache, who wept her husband's valour, and her sad presentiments for her infant son.

In modern painting, as it appeared in the hands of Raphael and Michael Angelo, a wider range was attempted : more spiritual and touching objects had come to engross the human mind. The mere contemplation of abstract character —its delineation by the graphic representation of the human form, had ceased to be the principal object of genius. The temple of the unknown God was no longer to be filled with idols made under the image of man. The Gospel had been preached to the poor ; the words of mercy and peace had been heard on the earth. Painting had come to be the auxiliary of religion ; it was in the churches of a spiritual and suffering faith that its impression was to be produced. Calvary was to be presented to the eye ; the feeling of the centurion, " Truly this man was the Son of God," to be engraven on the heart. It was to the faithful who were penetrated with the glad words of salvation, that the altar-pieces were addressed ; it was the feeling of the song of Simeon that had gone forth on the earth. Above all, the love of Heaven, first revealed in the Gospel, was to be portrayed in the image which our Saviour himself had selected for its representation, the tenderness of a mother for her offspring. The images of the Good Shepherd, the Innocent Lamb, the Immaculate Mother, the Divine Infant, the adoring St John, were, by the very events recorded in the Gospels, of necessity introduced into Scripture paintings. It was those divine feelings which painting, as it arose in modern Europe, was called to embody in the human form ; it was to this heavenly mission that the genius of Italy was called. And if ever there was a mind fitted to answer such a call—if ever the spirit of the

Gospel was breathed into the human breast, that mind and that breast were those of Raphael.

Michael Angelo was the personification of the genius of Dante. The bold conceptions, the awful agonies, the enduring suffering which are brought forth in that immortal poet, had penetrated his kindred spirit, and realised the *Inferno* in the representation of the *Last Judgment.* But it was the Spirit of Christ which had been breathed into the heart of Raphael. The divine words, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven," had inspired his immortal conceptions. It is neither physical beauty nor mental character, as in the Greek sculpture, which is represented in his paintings. It is the Divine Spirit breathed into the human heart, it is the incarnation of deity in the human form, that formed the object of his pencil. He has succeeded in the attempt beyond any other human being that ever existed. If any works of man ever deserved the name of divine, they are the *Holy Families* of Raphael.

Superficial writers will ask, what has Raphael to do with Virgil? Mere artists will inquire how they are to be benefited by the study of Tasso? Those, again, who have reflected on the means by which the higher stages in any art are attained, will acknowledge that, at a certain elevation, their principles are the same. To move the heart, whether by painting, poetry, or eloquence, requires the same mind. The means by which the effect is to be produced are not different. The one works, indeed, with the pencil, the other with the pen; the one composes in verse, the other in prose —but what then? These are the means to the end; they are not the end itself. There are many avenues to the human heart, but the inner doors in them all are to be opened only by one key, and that key is never denied to the suit of genius, and never to be attained but through its fervent petitions.

It is in his lesser pieces that the exquisite taste and divine conceptions of Raphael are chiefly to be seen. His greater paintings, the *Transfiguration*, the frescoes in the Vatican, the cartoons, are invaluable to the artist as studies, and specimens of the utmost power of drawing and energy of conception; but it is not there that the

divine Raphael appears. In the larger ones his object was to cover space and display talent; and in the prosecution of these objects he never has been exceeded; but it is in his groups of two or three figures that his most perfect ideas were realised. It is there that he has given free scope to his exquisite conception, intended to represent in the maternal, and therefore universally felt affection, the divine spirit and parental tenderness of the Gospel. "My son, give me thy heart," was what he always aimed at; "God is love," the idea which he ever strove to represent, as embodying the essence of the Christian faith. The Madonna della Seggiola at Florence, the Assumption of the Virgin at Dresden, the Madonna di Foligno in the Vatican, the Holy Family at Naples, St John in the Desert in the Tribune at Florence, the small Holy Family in the Louvre, the large Holy Family, with the flowers, brought from Fontainebleau, also in the Louvre, St Mark at Munich, and several of the lesser pieces of Raphael in the same rich collection in that city, are so many gems of art, embodying this conception, which to the end of the world, even when preserved only in the shadowy imitation of engraving, will improve the heart and refine the mind, as well as fascinate the imagination. It may be doubted if they ever will be equalled: excelled they can never be.

Whoever will study those inimitable productions, even when standing to gaze at the engravings from them in a print-shop window, will have no difficulty in feeling the justice of Cicero's remark, that all the arts which relate to humanity have a certain common bond, a species of consanguinity between them. The emotion produced by the highest excellence in them all is the same. So intense is this emotion, so burning the delight which it occasions, that it cannot be borne for any length of time: the mind's eye is averted from it as the eyeball is from the line of "insufferable brightness," as Gray calls it, which often precedes the setting of the sun; or the gaze of love, which even love itself cannot long endure. It is difficult to say in what this burning charm consists. Like genius or beauty, its presence is felt by all, but can be described by none. It would seem to be an emanation of heaven; a chink, as it were, opened, which lets us feel for a few seconds the ethe-

real joys of a superior state of existence. But it is needless to seek to define what all who have felt it must acknowledge passes all understanding.

It is a remarkable circumstance, indicative of the ethereal nature of the sentiment of love as depicted in the Poetry and Romances of modern times, that no attempt ever has been made to delineate it on canvass. The love of Heaven has been painted with divine tenderness by Raphael; the love of Earth, the allurements to the senses, with surpassing skill by Titian, Correggio, and the Caraccis. We have reclining Venuses, nymphs bathing, and seducing damsels enough, represented in painting, as well as Holy Families and infant Innocences; but neither Painting nor Statuary has ever thought of portraying on the canvass or marble the passion of Dido for Æneas, of Tancred for Clorinda, of Desdemona for Othello. The exquisite scene of the death of Clorinda, already given, has never yet been selected as the subject of painting. It would appear that that sentiment which so entirely subdues self, and eradicates, as it were, every feeling but the generous ones from the human breast, dwells too exclusively in the inmost recesses of the heart to be capable of representation in the external form. Like Heroism, Generosity, or Magnanimity, its existence may be learned from the actions; but its presence cannot be evinced from the expression. The reason is, that this refined feeling is found in so few breasts that no known symptoms of it could be recognised in the human countenance or form.

It is a common saying, even among persons of cultivated taste, that it is hopeless to attempt to advance anything new on the beauties of ancient authors; that everything that can be said on the subject has already been exhausted; and that it is in the more recent fields of modern literature that it is alone possible to avoid repetition. We are decidedly of opinion that this idea is erroneous, and that its diffusion has done more than anything else to degrade criticism to the low station which, with some honourable exceptions, it has so long held in the world of letters. It is the diversity of mind which is the real cause of mediocrity in observation: when the critic is obviously inferior to his author, he becomes ridiculous. But when

ancient excellence is contemplated with a generous eye, even when the mind that sees it is but slenderly gifted, who will say that nothing new will occur? When it meets kindred genius, when it is elevated by a congenial spirit, what a noble art does criticism become! What has it proved in the hands of Dryden and Pope, of Wilson and Macaulay! It is in the contemplation of ancient greatness, and its comparison with the parallel efforts of modern genius, that the highest flights of these gifted spirits have been attained, and the native generosity of real intellectual power most strikingly evinced. Criticism of words will soon come to an end; the notes of scholiasts and annotators are easily made, as apothecaries make drugs by pouring from one phial into another. But criticism of things, of ideas, of characters, of conceptions, can never come to an end; for every successive age is bringing forth fresh comparisons to make, and fresh combinations to exhibit. It is the outpouring of a heart overburdened with admiration which must be delivered, and will ever discover a new mode of deliverance.

How many subjects of critical comparison in this view, hitherto nearly untouched upon, has the literature of Europe, and even of this age, afforded! Æschylus, Shakspeare, and Schiller—Euripides, Alfieri, and Corneille—Sophocles, Metastasio, and Racine—Pindar, Horace, and Gray—Ovid, Ariosto, and Wieland—Lucretius, Darwin, and Campbell—Demosthenes, Cicero, and Burke—Thucydides, Tacitus, and Gibbon—Thomson, Cowper, and Claude Lorraine: such are a few which suggest themselves at first sight to every one who reflects on the rich retrospect of departed genius. It is like looking back to the Alps through the long and rich vista of Italian landscape; the scene continually varies, the features are ever new, the impression is constantly fresh, from the variety of intervening objects, though the glittering pinnacles of the inaccessible mountains ever shine from afar on the azure vault of heaven. Human genius is constantly furnishing new proofs of departed excellence. Human magnanimity is ever exhibiting fresh examples of the fidelity of former descriptions, or the grandeur of former conception. What said Hector, drawing his sword, when, betrayed by Minerva in his last

conflict with Achilles, he found himself without his lance in presence of his fully-armed and heaven-shielded antagonist?—"Not inglorious at least shall I perish, but after doing some great thing that may be spoken of in ages to come."*

* "Μὴ μὰν ἀσπερδει γε καὶ ἀκλειῶς ἀπολοίμην,
Ἀλλὰ μέγα ῥέξας τι καὶ ἐσσομενοισι πυθέσθαι."
—*Iliad*, xxii. 304.

GUIZOT

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Machiavel was the first historian who seems to have formed a conception of the philosophy of history. Before his time, the narrative of human events was little more than a series of biographies, imperfectly connected together by a few slight sketches of the empires on which the actions of their heroes were exerted. In this style of history, the ancient writers were, and to the end of time probably will continue to be, altogether inimitable. Their skill in narrating a story, in developing the events of a life, in tracing the fortunes of a city or a state, as they were raised by a succession of illustrious patriots, or sunk by a series of oppressive tyrants, has never been approached in modern times. The histories of Xenophon and Thucydides, of Livy and Sallust, of Cæsar and Tacitus, are all more or less formed on this model; and the more extended view of history, as embracing an account of the countries the transactions of which were narrated, originally formed, and to a great part executed, by the father of history, Herodotus, appears to have been, in an unaccountable manner, lost by his successors.

In these immortal works, however, human transactions are uniformly regarded as they have been affected by, or called forth the agency of, individual men. We are never presented with the view of society *in a mass;* as influenced by a series of causes and effects independent of the agency of individual man; or, to speak more correctly, in the development of which the agency is an unconscious, and often almost a passive, instrument. Constantly regarding history as an extensive species of biography, they not only did not withdraw the eye to the distance necessary to obtain

such a general view of the progress of things, but they did the reverse. Their great object was to bring the eye so close as to see the whole virtues or vices of the principal figures, which they exhibited on their moving panorama; and in so doing, they rendered it incapable of perceiving, at the same time, the movement of the whole social body of which they formed a part. Even Livy, in his pictured narrative of Roman victories, is essentially biographical. His inimitable work owes its enduring celebrity to the charming episodes of individual history, or graphic pictures of particular events with which it abounds; scarcely any general views on the progress of society, or the causes to which its astonishing progress in the Roman state was owing, are to be found. In the introduction to the life of Catiline, Sallust has given, with unequalled power, a sketch of the causes which corrupted the republic; and if his work had been pursued in the same style, it would indeed have been a philosophical history. But neither the Catiline nor the Jugurthine War are histories: they are chapters of history, containing two interesting biographies. Scattered through the writings of Tacitus, are to be found numerous caustic and profound observations on human nature, and the increasing vices and selfishness of a corrupted age: but, like the maxims of Rochefoucault, it is rather to individual than general humanity that they refer; and they strike us as so admirably just because they do not descibe general causes operating upon society as a body—which often make little impression save on a few reflecting minds—but strike direct to the human heart in a way which comes home to the breast of every individual who reads them.

Never was a juster observation than that the human mind is never quiescent: it may not give the external symptoms of action, but it does not cease to have the internal action: it sleeps, but even then it dreams. Writers innumerable have declaimed on the night of the Middle Ages, on the deluge of barbarism which, under the Goths, flooded the world, on the torpor of the human mind under the combined pressure of savage violence and priestly superstition; yet this was precisely the period when the minds of men, deprived of external vent, turned inwards on themselves; and that the learned and thoughtful, shut out from any

active part in society by the general prevalence of military violence, sought, in the solitude of the cloister, employment in reflecting on the mind itself, and the general causes which, under its guidance, operated upon society. The influence of this great change in the direction of thought at once appeared when knowledge, liberated from the monastery and the university, again took its place among the affairs of men. Machiavel in Italy and Bacon in England, for the first time in the annals of knowledge, reasoned upon human affairs *as a subject of general laws.* They spoke of the minds of men as permanently governed by certain causes, and of known principles always leading to the same results ; they treated of politics as a science in which certain known laws existed, and could be discovered, as in mechanics and hydraulics. This was a great step in advance, and demonstrated that the superior age of the world, and the wide sphere to which political observation had now been applied, had permitted the accumulation of such an increased store of facts, as permitted deductions, founded on experience, to be formed in regard to the affairs of nations. Still more, it showed that the attention of writers had been drawn to the general causes of human affairs ; that they reasoned on the actions of men as a subject of abstract thought ; regarded effects formerly produced as *likely to recur* from a similar combination of circumstances ; and formed conclusions for the regulation of future conduct, from the results of past experience. This tendency is, in an especial manner, conspicuous in the *Discorsi* of Machiavel, where certain general propositions are stated, deduced, indeed, from the events of Roman story, but announced as lasting truths, applicable to every future generation and to all circumstances of men. In depth of view and justness of observation, these views of the Florentine statesman have never been surpassed. Bacon's essays relate, for the most part, to subjects of morals, or domestic and private life ; but not unfrequently he touches on the general concerns of nations, and with the same profound observation of the past, and philosophic anticipation of the future.

Voltaire professed to elevate history in France from the *jejune* and trifling details of genealogy, courts, wars, and negotiations, in which it had hitherto, in his country, been involved, to the more general contemplation of arts and

philosophy, and the progress of human affairs; and in some respects he certainly effected a great reformation on the ponderous annalists who had preceded him. But the foundation of his history was still biography: he regarded human events only as they were grouped round two or three great men, or as they were influenced by the speculations of men of letters and science. The history of France he stigmatised as savage and worthless till the reign of Louis XIV.; the Russians he looked upon as barbarians till the time of Peter the Great. He thought the philosophers alone all in all: till they arose, and a sovereign appeared who collected them round his throne, and shed on them the rays of royal favour, human events were not worth narrating; they were merely the contests of one set of savages plundering another. Religion, in his eyes, was a mere priestly delusion to enslave and benight mankind; from its oppression the greatest miseries of modern times had flowed; the first step in the emancipation of the human mind was to chase for ever from the earth those sacerdotal tyrants. The most free-thinking historian will now admit that these views are essentially erroneous: he will allow that, viewing Christianity merely as a human institution, its effect in restraining the violence of feudal anarchy was incalculable; long anterior to the date of the philosophers, he will look for the broad foundation on which national character and institutions, for good or for evil, have been formed. Voltaire was of great service to history, by turning it from courts and camps to the progress of literature, science, and the arts; to the delineation of manners, and the preparation of anecdotes descriptive of character: but, notwithstanding all his talent, he never got a glimpse of the general causes which influence society. He gave us the history of philosophy, but not the philosophy of history.

The ardent genius and pictorial eye of Gibbon rendered him an incomparable delineator of events; and his powerful mind made him seize the *general* and characteristic features of society and manners, as they appear in different parts of the world, as well as the traits of individual greatness. His descriptions of the Roman empire in the zenith of its power, as it existed in the time of Augustus; of its decline and long protracted old age, under Constantine and his

successors on the Byzantine throne; of the manners of the pastoral nations, who, under different names, and for a succession of ages, pressed upon and at last overturned the empire; of the Saracens, who, issuing from the lands of Arabia, with the Koran in one hand and the cimeter in the other, urged on their resistless course, till they were arrested by the Atlantic on the one side, and the Indian ocean on the other; of the stern crusaders, who, nursed amid the cloistered shades and castellated realms of Europe, struggled with that devastating horde "when 'twas strongest, and ruled it when 'twas wildest;" of the long agony, silent decay, and ultimate resurrection of the Eternal City: are so many immortal pictures, which, to the end of the world, will fascinate every ardent and imaginative mind. But, notwithstanding this incomparable talent for general and characteristic description, he had not the mind necessary for a philosophical analysis of the series of causes which influence human events. He viewed religion with a jaundiced and prejudiced eye—the fatal bequest of his age and French education, unworthy alike of his native candour and inherent strength of understanding. He had profound philosophic ideas, and occasionally let them out with admirable effect; but the turn of his mind was essentially descriptive; and his powers were such, in that brilliant department, that they wiled him from the less inviting contemplation of general causes. We turn over his fascinating pages without wearying, but without ever discovering the general progress or apparent tendency of human affairs. We look in vain for the profound reflections of Machiavel on the permanent results of certain political combinations or experiments. He has led us through a "mighty maze;" but he has made no attempt to show it "not without a plan."

Hume is commonly called a philosophical historian, and so he is; but he has even less than Gibbon the power of unfolding the general causes which influence the progress of human events. He was not, properly speaking, a philosophic historian, but a philosopher writing history; and these are very different things. The practical statesman will often make a better delineator of the progress of human affairs than the philosophic recluse; for he is more

practically acquainted with their secret springs: it was not in the schools, but in the forum or the palace, that Sallust, Tacitus, and Burke acquired their deep insight into the human heart. Hume was gifted with admirable sagacity in political economy; and it is the good sense and depth of his views on that important subject, then for the first time brought to bear on the annals of man, that has chiefly gained for him, and with justice, the character of a philosophic historian. To this may be added the admirable clearness and rhetorical powers with which he has stated the principal arguments for and against the great changes in the English institutions which it fell to his lot to recount—arguments far abler than were either used by, or occurred to, the actors by whom they were brought about; for it is seldom that a Hume is found in the councils of men. With equal ability, too, he has given periodical sketches of manners, customs, and habits, mingled with valuable details on finance, commerce, and prices; all elements, and most important ones, in the formation of philosophical history. We owe a deep debt of gratitude to the man who has rescued these important facts from the ponderous folios where they were slumbering in forgotten obscurity, and brought them into the broad light of philosophic observation and popular narrative. But, notwithstanding all this, Hume is far from being gifted with the philosophy of history. He has collected or prepared many of the facts necessary for the science, but he has made little progress in it himself. He was essentially a sceptic. He aimed rather at spreading doubts than shedding light. Like Voltaire and Gibbon, he was scandalously prejudiced and unjust on the subject of religion; and to write modern history without correct views on that subject, is like playing Hamlet without the character of the Prince of Denmark. He was too indolent to acquire the vast store of facts indispensable for correct generalisation on the varied theatre of human affairs, and often drew hasty and incorrect conclusions from the events which particularly came under his observation. Thus the repeated indecisive battles between the fleets of Charles II. and the Dutch, drew from him the observation, apparently justified by their results, that sea-fights are seldom so important or decisive as those at land.

The fact is just the reverse, and might easily have been ascertained, even in his time, by a more extended induction. Witness the battle of Salamis, which repelled from Europe the tide of Persian invasion; that of Actium, which gave a master to the Roman world; that of Sluys, which exposed France to the dreadful English invasions, begun under Edward III.; that of Lepanto, which rolled back from Christendom the wave of Mahometan conquest; the defeat of the Armada, which permanently established the Reformation in Northern Europe; that of La Hogue, which broke the maritime strength of Louis XIV.; that of Trafalgar, which for ever took "ships, colonies, and commerce" from Napoleon, and spread them with the British colonial empire over half the globe.

Montesquieu owes his colossal reputation chiefly to his *Esprit des Loix;* but the *Grandeur et Decadence des Romains* is by much the greater work. It has never attained nearly the reputation in this country which it deserves, either in consequence of the English mind being less partial than the French to the philosophy of human affairs, or, as is more probable, from the system of education at our universities being so exclusively devoted to the study of words, that our scholars rarely arrive at the knowledge of things. It is impossible to imagine a work in which the philosophy of history is more ably condensed, or where there is exhibited, in a short space, a more profound view of the general causes to which the long-continued greatness and ultimate decline of that celebrated people were owing. It is to be regretted only that he did not come to modern times and other ages with the same masterly survey; the information collected in the *Esprit des Loix* would have furnished him with ample materials for such a work. In that noble treatise, the same philosophic and generalising spirit is conspicuous; but there is too great a love of system, an obvious partiality for fanciful analogies, and, not unfrequently, conclusions hastily deduced from insufficient data. These errors, the natural result of a philosophic and profound mind wandering without a guide in the mighty maze of human transactions, are entirely avoided in the *Grandeur et Decadence des Romains,* where he was retained by authentic history to a known train of

events, and where his imaginative spirit and marked turn for generalisation found sufficient scope, and no more, to produce the most perfect commentary on the annals of a single people of which the human mind can boast.

Bossuet, in his *Universal History*, aimed at a higher object; he professed to give nothing less than a development of the plan of Providence in the government of human affairs, during the whole of antiquity, and down to the reign of Charlemagne. The idea was magnificent, and the mental powers, as well as eloquence, of the Bishop of Meaux promised the greatest results from such an undertaking. But the execution has by no means corresponded to the conception. Voltaire has said, that he professed to give a view of universal history, and he has only given the history of the Jews; and there is too much truth in the observation. He never got out of the fetters of his ecclesiastical education; Jerusalem was the centre round which he supposed all other nations revolved. That was no doubt true with reference to the future advent of Christianity; but it was not the whole truth with reference to human affairs. Many other objects entered into the general plan of Providence for the government of the world. Bossuet's mind was polemical, not philosophic; a great theologian, he was but an indifferent historian. In one particular, indeed, his observations are admirable, and, at times, in the highest degree impressive. He never loses sight of the divine superintendence of human affairs; he sees in all the revolutions of empires the progress of a mighty plan for the ultimate redemption of mankind; and he traces the workings of this superintending power in all the transactions of man. But it may be doubted whether he took the correct view of this sublime but mysterious subject. He supposes the divine agency to influence *directly* the affairs of men—not through the medium of general laws, or the adaptation of our active propensities to the varying circumstances of our condition. Hence his views strike at the freedom of human actions; he makes men and nations little more than the puppets by which the Deity works out the great drama of human affairs. Without disputing the reality of such immediate agency in some particular cases, it may safely be affirmed, that by far the greater

part of the affairs of men are left entirely to their own guidance, and that their actions are overruled, not directed, by Almighty power to work out the purposes of Divine beneficence.

That which Bossuet left undone, Robertson did. The first volume of his *Charles V.* may justly be regarded as the greatest step which the human mind had yet made in the philosophy of history. Extending his views beyond the admirable survey which Montesquieu had given of the rise and decline of the Roman Empire, he aimed at giving a view of the *progress of society* in modern times. This matter, of the progress of society, was a favourite subject at that period with political philosophers; and, by combining the speculations of these ingenious men with the solid basis of facts which his erudition and industry had worked out, Robertson succeeded in producing the most luminous, and at the same time just, view of the progress of nations that had yet been presented among mankind. The philosophy of history here appeared in its full lustre. Men and nations were exhibited in their just proportions. Society was viewed, not only in its details, but in its masses; the *general causes* which influence its progress, running into or mutually affecting each other, and yet all conspiring with more or less efficacy to bring about a general result, were exhibited in the most lucid and masterly manner. The great causes which have contributed to form the elements of modern society—the decaying civilisation of Rome—the irruption of the northern nations—the prostration and degradation of the conquered people—the revival of the military spirit with the private wars of the nobles—the feudal system and institutions of chivalry—the crusades, and revival of letters following the capture of Constantinople by the Turks—the invention of printing, and consequent extension of knowledge to the great body of the people—the discovery of the compass, and, with it, of America, by Columbus, and the doubling of the Cape of Good Hope by Vasco de Gama—the discovery of gunpowder, and prodigious change thereby effected in the implements of human destruction—are all there treated in the most luminous manner, and, in general, with the justest discrimination. The vast agency of general causes upon the

progress of mankind now became apparent: unseen powers, like the deities of Homer in the war of Troy, were seen to mingle at every step with the tide of sublunary affairs; and so powerful and irresistible does their agency, when once revealed, appear, that we are perhaps now likely to fall into the opposite extreme, and to ascribe too little to individual effort or character. Men and nations seem to be alike borne forward on the surface of a mighty stream, which they are equally incapable of arresting or directing; and, after surveying the vain and impotent attempts of individuals to extricate themselves from the current, we are apt to exclaim with the philosopher,* "He has dashed with his oar to hasten the cataract; he has waved with his fan to give speed to the winds."

A nearer examination, however, will convince every candid inquirer, that individual character exercises, if not a paramount, yet a very powerful influence on human affairs. Whoever investigates minutely any period of history will find, on the one hand, that general causes affecting the whole of society are in constant operation; and on the other, that these general causes themselves are often set in motion, or directed in their effects, by particular men. Thus, of what efficacy were the constancy of Pitt, the foresight of Burke, the arm of Nelson, the wisdom of Wellington, the genius of Wellesley, in bringing to maturity the British empire, and spreading the Anglo-Saxon race, in pursuance of its appointed mission, over half the globe! What marvellous effect had the heroism and skill of Robert Bruce upon the subsequent history of Scotland, and, through it, on the fortunes of the British race! Thus biography, or the deeds and thoughts of illustrious men, still forms a most important, and certainly the most interesting, part even of general history; and the perfection of that noble art consists, not in the exclusive delineation of individual achievement, or the concentration of attention on general causes, but in the union of the two in due proportions, as they really exist in nature, and determine, by their combined operation, the direction of human affairs. The talent now required in the historian partakes, accordingly, of this twofold character. He is expected to write

* Fergusson.

philosophy and to paint biography; to unite skill in drawing individual character, the power of describing individual achievements, with a clear perception of general causes, and the generalising faculty of enlarged philosophy. He must combine in his mind the powers of the microscope and the telescope; be ready, like the steam-engine, at one time to twist a fibre, at another, to propel a hundred-gun ship.

With all his generalising powers, however, Robertson fell into one defect—or rather, he was unable, in one respect, to extricate himself from the prejudices of his age and profession. He was not a freethinker—on the contrary, he was a sincere and pious divine; but he lived in an age of freethinkers—they had the chief influence in the formation of a writer's fame; and he was too desirous of literary reputation to incur the hazard of ridicule or contempt, by assigning too prominent a place to the obnoxious topic. Thence he has ascribed far too little influence to Christianity, in restraining the ferocity of savage manners, preserving alive the remains of ancient knowledge, and laying in general freedom the broad and deep foundations of European society. He has not overlooked these topics, but he has not given them their due place, nor assigned them their proper weight. He lived and died in comparative retirement; and he was never able to shake himself free from the prejudices of his country and education, on the subject of the Romish religion. Not that he exaggerated the abuses and enormities of the Roman Catholic superstition which brought about the Reformation, nor the vast benefits which Luther conferred upon mankind by bringing them to light: both were so great, that they hardly admitted of exaggeration. His error—and, in the delineation of the progress of society in modern Europe, it was a very great one—consisted in overlooking the beneficial effect of that very superstition, then so pernicious, in a *prior age of the world*, when violence was universal, crime prevalent alike in high and low places, and government impotent to check either the tyranny of the great or the madness of the people. Then it was that superstition was the greatest blessing which Providence, in mercy, could bestow on mankind; for it effected what the wisdom of the learned or the efforts of the active were alike unable to effect; it restrained by imaginary terrors the violence which

was inaccessible to the force of real ones ; and spread that protection under the shadow of the Cross, which could never have been obtained by the power of the sword. Robertson was wholly insensible to these early and inestimable blessings of the Christian faith ; he has admirably delineated the beneficial influence of the Crusades upon subsequent society, but on this all-important topic he is silent. Yet, whoever has studied the condition of European society in the ninth, tenth, and eleventh centuries, as it has since been developed in the admirable works of Sismondi, Thierry, Michelet, and Guizot, must be aware that the services, not merely of Christianity, but of the superstitions which had usurped its place, were, during that long period, incalculable ; and that, but for them, European society would infallibly have sunk, as Asiatic in every age has done, beneath the desolating sword of barbarian power.

Sismondi—if the magnitude, and in many respects the merit, of his works be considered—must be regarded as one of the greatest historians of modern times. His *History of the Italian Republics* in sixteen, and that of the *Monarchy of France* in thirty volumes, attest the variety and extent of his antiquarian researches, as well as the indefatigable industry of his pen; his *Literature of the South of Europe* in four, and *Miscellaneous Essays* in three volumes, show how happily he has blended these weighty investigations with the lighter topics of literature and poetry, and the political philosophy which, in recent times, has come to occupy so large a place in the study of all who have turned their mind to the progress of human affairs. Nor is the least part of his merit to be found in the admirable skill with which he has condensed, each in two volumes, his great histories, for the benefit of that numerous class of readers who, unable or unwilling to face the formidable undertaking of going through his great histories, are desirous of obtaining such a brief summary of their leading events as may suffice for persons of ordinary perseverance or education. His mind was essentially philosophical ; and it is the philosophy of modern history, accordingly, which he has exerted himself so strenuously to unfold. He views society at a distance, and exhibits its great changes in their just proportions, and, in general, with their true effects. His success in this arduous undertaking

has been great indeed. He has completed the picture of which Robertson had only formed the sketch—and completed it with such a prodigious collection of materials, and so lucid an arrangement of them in their appropriate places, as to have left future ages little to do but draw the just conclusions from the results of his labours.

With all these merits, and they are great, and with this rare combination of antiquarian industry with philosophic generalisation, Sismondi is far from being a perfect historian. He did well to abridge his great works ; for he will find few readers who will have perseverance enough to go through them. An abridgment was tried of Gibbon ; but it had little success, and has never since been attempted. You might as well publish an abridgment of Waverley or Ivanhoe. Every reader of the *Decline and Fall* must feel that condensation is impossible, without an omission of interest or a curtailment of beauty. But it is otherwise with Sismondi. With all his admirable qualities as a general and philosophic historian, he wants the one thing needful in exciting interest—descriptive and dramatic power. He was a man of great vigour of thought and clearness of observation, but little genius—at least of that kind of genius which is necessary to move the feelings or warm the imagination. That was his principal defect ; and it will prevent his great works from ever commanding the attention of a numerous body of general readers, however much they may be esteemed by the learned and studious. Conscious of this deficiency, he makes scarcely any attempt to make his narrative interesting ; but, reserving his whole strength for general views on the progress of society, or philosophic observations on its most important changes, he fills up the intermediate space with long quotations from chronicles, memoirs, and state papers—a sure way, if the selection is not made with great judgment, of rendering the whole insupportably tedious. Every narrative, to be interesting, should be given in the historian's *own words*, unless on those occasions, by no means frequent, when some striking or remarkable expressions of a speaker, or contemporary writer, are to be preserved. Unity of style and expression is as indispensable in a history which is to move the heart, or fascinate the imagination, as in a tragedy, a painting, or an epic poem.

But, in addition to this, Sismondi's general views, though ordinarily just, and always expressed with clearness and precision, are not always to be taken without examination. Like Robertson, he was never able to extricate himself entirely from the early prejudices of his country and education ; hardly any of the Geneva school of philosophers have been able to do so. Brought up in that learned and able, but narrow and in some respects bigoted community, he was early engaged in the vast undertaking of the *History of the Italian Republics*. Thus, before he was well aware of it, and at a time of life when the opinions are flexible, and easily moulded by external impressions, he became irrevocably enamoured of such little communities as he had lived in or was describing, and imbibed all the prejudices against the Church of Rome which have naturally, from close proximity, and the endurance of unutterable evils at its hands, been ever prevalent among the Calvinists of Geneva. These causes have tinged his otherwise impartial views with two signal prejudices, which appear in all his writings where these subjects are even remotely alluded to. His partiality for municipal institutions, and the social system depending on them, is as extravagant, as his aversion to the Church of Rome is conspicuous and intemperate. His idea of a perfect society would be a confederacy of little republics, governed by popularly elected magistrates, holding the scarlet old lady of Rome in utter abomination, and governed in matters of religion by the Presbyterian forms, and the tenets of Calvin. It is not to be wondered at, that the annalist of the countries of Tasso and Dante, of Titian and Machiavel, of Petrarch and Leonardo da Vinci, of Galileo and Michael Angelo, should conceive, that in no other state of society is such scope afforded for mental cultivation and the development of the highest efforts of genius. Still less is it surprising, that the historian of the crusade against the Albigenses, of the unheard-of atrocities of Simon de Montfort, of the wholesale massacres, burnings, and torturings, which have brought indelible disgrace on the Romish priesthood, should feel deeply interested in a faith which has extricated his own country from such atrocious persecution. But still, this indulgence of these natural, and in some respects praiseworthy feelings, has blinded Sismondi to

the insurmountable evils of a confederacy of small republics at this time, amidst surrounding powerful and monarchical states; and to the inappreciable blessings of the Christian faith, and even of the Romish superstition, before the period when its infamous cruelties began, when its warfare was only with the oppressor, its struggles with the destroyers of the human race.

But truth is great, and will prevail. Those just views of modern society, which neither the luminous eye of Robertson, nor the learned research and philosophic mind of Sismondi could reach, have been brought forward by a writer of surpassing ability, whose fame as a historian and a philosopher is, for the time, overshadowed by the more fleeting celebrity of the statesman and the politician. We will not speak of M. Guizot in the latter character, much as we are tempted to do so by the high and honourable part which he has long borne in European diplomacy, and the signal ability with which, in the midst of a short-sighted and rebellious generation, clamouring, as the Romans of old, for the *multis utile bellum*, he has sustained his sovereign's wise and magnanimous resolution to maintain peace. We are too near the time to appreciate the magnitude of these blessings; men would not now believe through what a crisis the British empire, unconscious of its danger, passed, when M. Thiers was dismissed three years and a half ago by Louis Philippe, and M. Guizot called to the helm. But when the time arrives, as arrive it will, that the diplomatic secrets of that period are brought to light; when the instructions of the revolutionary minister to the admiral of the Toulon fleet are made known, and the marvellous chance which prevented their being acted upon by him has become matter of history, it will be admitted that the civilised world have good cause to thank M. Guizot for saving it from a contest as vehement, as perilous, and probably as disastrous to all concerned, as that which followed the French Revolution.

Our present business is with M. Guizot as a historian and philosopher—a character in which he will be remembered long after his services to humanity, as a statesman and a minister, have ceased to attract the attention of men. In those respects, we place him in the very highest rank among the writers of modern Europe. It must be understood, how-

ever, in what his greatness consists, lest the readers, expecting what they will not find, experience disappointment when they begin the study of his works. He is neither imaginative nor pictorial ; he seldom aims at the pathetic, and has little eloquence. He is not a Livy nor a Gibbon. Nature has not given him either dramatic or descriptive powers. He is a man of the highest genius ; but it consists not in narrating particular events, or describing individual achievement. It is in the discovery of general causes ; in tracing the operation of changes in society which escape ordinary observation ; in seeing whence man has come, and whither he is going, that his greatness consists ; and in that loftiest of the regions of history he is unrivalled. We know of no author who has traced the changes of society, and the general causes which determine the fate of nations, with such just views and so much sagacious discrimination. He is not, properly speaking, a historian ; his vocation and object were different. He is a great discourser on history. If ever the philosophy of history was embodied in a human being, it is in M. Guizot.

The style of this great author is, in every respect, suited to his subject. He does not aim at the highest flights of fancy ; makes no attempt to warm the soul or melt the feelings ; is seldom imaginative, and never descriptive. But he is uniformly lucid, sagacious, and discriminating; deduces his conclusions with admirable clearness from his premises, and occasionally warms from the innate grandeur of his subject into a glow of fervent eloquence. He seems to treat of human affairs as if he viewed them from a loftier sphere than other men ; as if he were elevated above the usual struggles and contests of humanity, and a superior power had withdrawn the veil which shrouds their secret causes and course from the gaze of sublunary beings. He cares not to dive into the secrets of cabinets ; attaches little, perhaps too little, importance to individual character ; but fixes his steady gaze on the great and lasting causes which, in a durable manner, influence human affairs. He views them not from year to year but from century to century ; and, when considered in that view, it is astonishing how much the importance of individual agency disappears. Important in their generation—sometimes almost omnipotent for good or for

evil while they live—particular men, how great soever, rarely leave any very important consequences behind them; or at least rarely do what other men might not have done as effectually as they, and which was not already determined by the tendency of the human mind, and the tide, either of flow or ebb, by which human affairs were at the time wafted to and fro. The desperate struggles of war or of ambition in which they were engaged, and in which so much genius and capacity were exerted, are swept over by the flood of time, and seldom leave any lasting trace behind. It is the men who determine the direction of this tide, who imprint their character on general thought, who are the real directors of human affairs; it is the giants of thought who, in the end, govern the world. Kings and ministers, princes and generals, warriors and legislators, are but the ministers of their blessings or their curses to mankind. But their dominion seldom begins till themselves are mouldering in their graves.

Guizot's largest work, in point of size, is his translation of Gibbon's *Rome;* and the just and philosophic spirit in which he viewed the course of human affairs was admirably calculated to provide an antidote to the sceptical sneers which, in a writer of such genius and strength of understanding, are at once the marvel and the disgrace of that immortal work. He has begun also a history of the English Revolution, to which he was led by having been the editor of a valuable collection of Memoirs relating to the Great Rebellion, translated into French, in twenty-five volumes. But this work only got the length of two volumes, and came no further down than the death of Charles I., an epoch no further on in the English than the execution of Louis in the French revolution. This history is clear, lucid, and valuable; but it is written with little eloquence, and has met with no great success: the author's powers were were not of the dramatic or pictorial kind necessary to paint that dreadful story. These were editorial or industrial labours unworthy of Guizot's mind; it was when he delivered lectures from the chair of history in Paris that his genius shone forth in its proper sphere and its true lustre.

His *Civilisation en France*, in five volumes, *Civilisation Européenne* and *Essais sur l'Histoire de France*, each in

one volume, are the fruits of these professional labours. The same profound thought, sagacious discrimination, and lucid view, are conspicuous in them all ; but they possess different degrees of interest to the English reader. The *Civilisation en France* is the groundwork of the whole, and it enters at large into the whole details, historical, legal, and antiquarian, essential for its illustration, and the proof of the various propositions which it contains. In the *Civilisation Européenne*, and *Essays on the History of France*, however, the general results are given with equal clearness and greater brevity. We do not hesitate to say, that they appear to us to throw more light on the history of society in modern Europe, and the general progress of mankind, from the exertions of its inhabitants, than any other works in existence ; and it is of them, especially the first, that we propose to give our readers some account.

The most important event which ever occurred in the history of mankind, is the one concerning which contemporary writers have given us the least satisfactory accounts. Beyond all doubt, the overthrow of Rome by the Goths was the most momentous catastrophe which has occurred on the earth since the deluge ; yet, if we examine either the historians of antiquity or the earliest of modern times, we find it wholly impossible to understand to what cause so great a catastrophe had been owing. What gave, in the third and fourth centuries, so prodigious an impulse to the northern nations, and enabled them, after being so long repelled by the arms of Rome, finally to prevail over it ? What, still more, so completely paralysed the strength of the empire during that period, and produced that astonishing weakness in the ancient conquerors of the world, which rendered them the easy prey of those whom they had so often subdued ? The ancient writers content themselves with saying, that the people became corrupted ; that they lost their military courage ; that the recruiting of the legions, from among the free inhabitants of the empire, became impossible ; and that the semi-barbarous tribes on the frontier could not be relied on to uphold its fortunes. But a very little reflection must be sufficient to show that there must have been much more in it than this, before a race of conquerors was converted into one of slaves ; before the legions fled before the barbarians,

and the strength of the civilised was overthrown by the energy of the savage world. For what prevented a revenue from being raised in the third or fourth, as well as the first or second centuries? Corruption in its worst form had doubtless pervaded the higher ranks in Rome from the emperor downward: but these vices are the faults of the exalted and the affluent only; they never have extended, and never will extend generally to the great body of the community—for this plain reason, that they are not rich enough to purchase them. But the remarkable thing is, that, in the decline of the empire, it was in the lower ranks that the greatest and most fatal weakness first appeared. Long before the race of the Patricians had become extinct, the free cultivators had disappeared from the fields. Leaders and generals of the most consummate abilities, of the greatest daring, frequently arose; but their efforts proved in the end ineffectual, from the impossibility of finding a sturdy race of followers to fill their ranks. The legionary Italian soldier was awanting—his place was imperfectly supplied by the rude Dacian, the hardy German, the faithless Goth. So completely were the inhabitants of the provinces within the Rhine and the Danube paralysed, that they ceased to make any resistance to the hordes of invaders; and the fortunes of the empire were, for several generations, sustained solely by the heroic efforts of individual leaders—Belisarius, Narces, Julian, Aurelian, Constantine, and many others—whose renown, though it could not rouse the pacific inhabitants to warlike efforts, yet attracted military adventurers from all parts of the world to their standard. Now, what weakened and destroyed the rural population? It could not be luxury; on the contrary, they were suffering under excess of poverty, and bent down beneath a load of taxes, which in Gaul, in the time of Constantine, amounted, as Gibbon tells us, to nine pounds sterling on each freeman? What was it, then, which occasioned the depopulation and weakness? This is what it behoves us to know—this it is which ancient history has left untold.

It is here that the vast step in the philosophy of history made from ancient to modern times is apparent. From a few detached hints and insulated facts, left by the ancient annalists, apparently ignorant of their value and careless of

their preservation, modern industry, guided by the light of philosophy, has reared up the true solution of the difficulty, and revealed the real causes, hidden from the ordinary gaze, which, even in the midst of its greatest prosperity, gradually but certainly undermined the strength of the empire. Michelet, in his *Gaule sous les Romains*, a most able and interesting work; Thierry, in his *Domination Romaine en Gaule*, and his *Histoire des Rois Merovingiens;* Sismondi, in the three first volumes of his *Histoire des Français;* and Guizot, in his *Civilisation Européenne*, and the first volumes of his *Essais sur l'Histoire de France*, have applied their great powers to this most interesting subject. It may safely be affirmed, that thay have got, in a great degree at least, to the bottom of the subject, and lifted up the veil from one of the darkest and yet most momentous changes in the history of mankind. Guizot gives the following account of the principal causes which silently undermined the strength of the empire, flowing from the peculiar organisation of ancient society :—

"When Rome extended, what did it do? Follow its history, and you will find that it was everlastingly engaged in conquering or founding cities. It was with cities that it fought—with cities that it contracted treaties—into cities that it sent colonies. The history of the conquest of the world by Rome is nothing but the history of the conquest and foundation of a great number of cities. In the East, the expansion of the Roman power assumed, from the very outset, a somewhat dissimilar character; the population was differently distributed from the West, and much less concentrated in cities; but in the European world, the foundation or conquest of towns was the uniform result of Roman conquest. In Gaul and Spain, in Italy, it was constantly towns which opposed the barrier to Roman domination, and towns which were founded or garrisoned by the legions, or strengthened by colonies, to retain them, when vanquished, in a state of subjection. Great roads stretched from one town to another; the multitude of cross-roads which now intersect each other in every direction was unknown. They had nothing in common with that multitude of little monuments, villages, churches, castles, villas, and cottages, which now cover our provinces. Rome has bequeathed to us nothing, either in its capital or its provinces, but the *municipal character*, which produced immense monuments on certain points, destined for the use of the vast population which was there assembled together.

"From this peculiar conformation of society in Europe, under the Roman dominion, consisting of a vast conglomeration of cities, with each a dependent territory, all independent of each other, arose the absolute necessity for a central and absolute government. One municipality in Rome might conquer the world; but to retain it in subjection, and provide for the government of all its multifarious parts, was a very different matter. This was one of the chief causes of the general adoption of a strong concentrated government under the empire. Such a centralised despotism not only succeeded in restraining and regulating all the incoherent members of the vast dominion, but the idea of a central irresistible authority insinuated itself

into men's minds everywhere, at the same time, with wonderful facility. At first sight, one is astonished to see, in that prodigious and ill-united aggregate of little republics, in that accumulation of separate municipalities, spring up so suddenly an unbounded respect for the sacred authority of the empire. But the truth is, it had become a matter of absolute necessity, that the bond which held together the different parts of this heterogeneous dominion should be very powerful; and this it was which gave it so ready a reception in the minds of men.

"But when the vigour of the central power declined during a course of ages, from the pressure of external warfare and the weakness of internal corruption, this necessity was no longer felt. The capital ceased to be able to provide for the provinces; it rather sought protection from them. During four centuries, the central power of the Emperors incessantly struggled against this increasing debility; but the moment at length arrived when all the practised skill of despotism over the long *insouciance* of servitude could no longer keep together the huge and unwieldy body. In the fourth century we see it at once break up and disunite; the barbarians entered on all sides from without, the provinces ceased to oppose any resistance from within, the cities to evince any regard for the general welfare; and, as in the disaster of a shipwreck, every one looked out for his individual safety. Thus, on the dissolution of the Empire, the same general state of society presented itself as in its cradle. The imperial authority sank into the dust, and municipal institutions alone survived the disaster. This, then, was the chief legacy which the ancient bequeathed to the modern world—for it alone survived the storm by which the former had been destroyed—cities and a municipal organisation everywhere established. But it was not the only legacy. Beside it, there was the recollection at least of the awful majesty of the Emperor; of a distant, unseen, but sacred and irresistible power. These are the two ideas which antiquity bequeathed to modern times. On the one hand, the municipal *régime*, its rules, customs, and principles of liberty; on the other, a common, general, civil legislation, and the idea of absolute power, of a sacred majesty, the principle of order and servitude."—*Civilisation Européenne*, 20, 23.

The causes which produced the extraordinary, and at first sight unaccountable, depopulation of the country districts, not only in Italy, but in Gaul, Spain, and all the European provinces of the Roman Empire, are, to a certain extent, explained by Guizot in his *Essays on the History of France*, and have been fully demonstrated by Sismondi, Thierry, and Michelet. They were a natural consequence of the municipal system, then universally established as the very basis of civilisation in the whole Roman Empire, and may be seen urging, from a similar cause, the Turkish Empire to dissolution at this day. This was the imposition of a certain fixed duty, as a burden on each municipality, to be raised, indeed, by its own members, but admitting of no diminution, save under the most special circumstances, and on an express exemption by the emperor. Had the great bulk of the people been free and the empire prosperous, this fixity of impost would have been the greatest of all blessings.

It is the precise boon so frequently and earnestly implored by our Ryots in India, and indeed by the cultivators all over the East. But when the Empire was beset on all sides with enemies—only the more rapacious and pressing that the might of the legions had so long confined them within the comparatively narrow limits of their own sterile territories—and disasters, frequent and serious, were laying waste the frontier provinces, it became the most dreadful of all scourges; because, as the assessment on each district was fixed, and scarcely ever suffered any abatement, every disaster experienced increased the burden on the survivors who had escaped it, until they became bent down under such a weight of taxation as, coupled with the small number of freemen on whom it exclusively fell, crushed every attempt at productive industry. It was the same thing as if all the farmers on each estate were to be bound to make up annually the same amount of rent to their landlord, no matter how many of them had become insolvent. We know how long the agriculture of Britain, in a period of declining prices and frequent disaster, would exist under such a system.

Add to this what these writers have not dwelt on, but which was more powerful than any other cause in producing the ruin of the Roman Empire, the necessary effect which the free circulation of grain, throughout its whole extent, had in depressing the agriculture of Italy, Gaul, and Greece. They were unable to withstand the competition of Egypt, Libya, and Sicily, the storehouses of the world, where the benignity of the climate and the riches of the soil rewarded seventy or a hundredfold the labours of the husbandman. Gaul, where the increase was only sevenfold—Italy, where it seldom exceeded twelve—Spain, where it was never so high, were crushed in the struggle. The mistress of the world, as Tacitus bewails, had come to depend for her subsistence on the floods of the Nile. Unable to compete with the cheap grain raised in the more favoured regions of the south, the cultivators of Italy and Gaul gradually retired from the contest. They devoted their extensive estates to pasturage, because live cattle or dairy produce could not bear the expense of being shipped from Africa, or did not exist in its arid provinces; and the race of agriculturists, the strength of the legions, disappeared from the fields, and was

lost in the needy and indolent crowd of urban citizens, in part maintained by tributes in corn brought from Egypt and Libya. This augmented the burdens upon those who remained in the rural districts; for, as the taxes of each municipality remained the same, every one that withdrew into the towns left an additional burden on the shoulders of his brethren who remained behind. So powerful was the operation of these two causes—the fixity in the state burdens payable by each municipality, and the constantly declining prices, owing to the vast import from agricultural regions more favoured by nature—that it fully equalled the effect of the ravages of the barbarians in the frontier provinces exposed to their incursions; and the depopulation of the rural districts was as complete in Italy and Gaul, before a barbarian had passed the Alps or set his foot across the Rhine, as in the plains between the Alps or the Adriatic and the Danube, which had for long been ravaged by their arms.*

Domestic slavery conspired with these evils to prevent the healing power of nature from closing these yawning wounds. Gibbon estimates the slaves throughout the Empire, in its latter days, at a number equal to that of the freemen; in other words, one-half of the whole inhabitants were in a state of servitude; and as there were 120,000,000 souls under the Roman sway, 60,000,000 were in that degraded condition. There is reason to believe that the number of the slaves was still greater than this estimate, and at least double that of the freemen; for it is known by an authentic enumeration, that, in the time of the Emperor Claudius, the number of citizens in the Empire was only 6,945,000 men, who, with their families, might amount to 20,000,000 souls; and the total number of freemen was about double that of the citizens.† In one family alone, in the time of Pliny, there were 4116 slaves.‡ But take the number of slaves, according to Gibbon's computation, at only half the entire population, what a prodigious abstraction must this multitude of slaves have made from the physical

* See "The Roman Campagna," in Vol. II., and "The Fall of Rome," in the present volume of this collection, where this subject, scarce noticed by these able writers, but perhaps the most important that can now occupy the attention of all men of thought in the British Empire, is treated of at large.

† Gibbon. ‡ Pliny, *Hist. Nat.* xxxiii. 47.

and moral strength of the empire! Half the people requiring food, needing restraint, incapable of trust, and yet adding nothing to the muster-roll of the legions, or the persons by whom the fixed and immovable annual taxes were to be made good! In what state would the British Empire now be, if we were subjected to the action of similar causes of ruin? A vast and unwieldy dominion, exposed on every side to the incursions of barbarous and hostile nations, daily increasing in numbers and augmenting in military skill; a fixed taxation, for which the whole free inhabitants of every municipality were jointly and severally responsible, to meet the increasing military establishment required by these perils; a declining, and at length extinct, agriculture in the central provinces of the Empire, owing to the deluge of cheap grain from its fertile extremities, wafted over the waters of the Mediterranean; multitudes of turbulent freemen in cities, kept quiet by daily distribution of provisions, at the public expense, from the imperial granaries; and a half, or two-thirds, of the whole population in a state of slavery, neither bearing any share of the public burdens, nor adding to the strength of the military array of the Empire. Such are the discoveries of modern philosophy, as to the causes of the decline and ultimate fall of the Roman Empire, gleaned from a few facts, accidentally preserved by the ancient writers, apparently unconscious of their value! It is a noble science which, in so short a time, has presented such a gift to mankind.

Guizot has announced, and ably illustrated, a great truth, which, when traced to its legitimate consequences, will be found to go far towards dispelling many of the pernicious innovating dogmas which have so long been afloat in the world. It is this, that whenever an institution, though apparently pernicious in our eyes, has long existed, and under a great variety of circumstances, we may rest assured that it in reality has been attended with some advantages which counterbalance its evils, and that upon the whole it is beneficial in its tendency. This important principle is thus stated:—

"Independent of the efforts of man, there is established by a law of providence, which it is impossible to mistake, and which is analagous to what we witness in the natural world, a certain measure of order, reason, and justice, without which society cannot exist. From the single fact of its

endurance we may conclude, with certainty, that a society is not completely absurd, insensate, or iniquitous; that it is not destitute of the elements of reason, truth, and justice, which alone can give life to society. If, the more that society develops itself, the stronger does this principle become—if it is daily accepted by a greater number of men, it is a certain proof that in the lapse of time there has been progressively introduced into it more reason, more justice, more right. It is thus that the idea of political legitimacy has arisen.

"This principle has for its foundation, in the first instance, at least in a certain degree, the great principles of moral legitimacy—justice, reason, truth. Then came the sanction of time, which always begets the presumption of reason having directed arrangements which have long endured. In the early periods of society, we too often find force and falsehood ruling the cradles of royalty, aristocracy, democracy, and even the church; but everywhere you will see this force and falsehood yielding to the reforming hand of time, and right and truth taking their place in the rulers of civilisation. It is this progressive infusion of right and truth which has by degrees developed the idea of political legitimacy: it is thus that it has become established in modern civilisation. At different times, indeed, attempts have been made to substitute for this idea the banner of despotic power; but, in doing so, they have turned it aside from its true origin. It is so little the banner of despotic power, that it is in the name of right and justice that it has overspread the world. As little is it exclusive: it belongs neither to persons, classes, nor sects; it arises wherever the idea of right has developed itself. We shall meet with this principle in systems the most opposite: in the feudal system, in the municipalities of Flanders and Germany, in the republics of Italy, as well as in simple monarchies. It is a character diffused through the various elements of modern civilisation, and the perception of which is indispensable to the right understanding of its history."—*Lecture* iii. 9, 11; *Civilisation Européenne.*

No principle ever was announced of more practical importance in legislating for mankind than is contained in this passage. The doctrine is somewhat obscurely stated, and not with the precision which in general distinguishes the French writers; but the import of it seems to be this—That no system of government can long exist among men, unless it is substantially, and in the majority of cases, founded in reason and justice, and sanctioned by experienced utility for the people among whom it exists; and therefore, that we may predicate with perfect certainty of any institution which has been generally extended and long established, that it has been upon the whole beneficial, and should be modified or altered with a very cautious hand. That this proposition is true, will probably be disputed by none who have thought much and dispassionately on human affairs: for all human institutions are formed and supported by men; and unless men had some reason for supporting them, they would speedily sink to the ground. It is in vain to say a privileged class have got possession of the power, and they make

use of it to perpetuate these abuses. Doubtless, they are always sufficiently inclined to do so; but a privileged class, or a despot, is always a mere handful against the great body of the people; and unless their power is supported by the force of general opinion, founded on experienced utility upon the whole, it could not maintain its ground a single week. And this explains a fact observed by an able and ingenious writer of the present day,* that if almost all the great convulsions recorded in history are attentively considered, it will be found that, after a brief period of strenuous, and often almost superhuman effort, on the part of the people, they have terminated in the establishment of a government and institutions differing scarcely, except in name, from that which had preceded the struggle. It is hardly necessary to remark how striking a confirmation the English revolution of 1688, and the French of 1830, afford of this truth.

And this explains what is the true meaning of, and solid foundation for, that reverence for antiquity which is so strongly implanted in human nature, and is never forgotten for any considerable time without inducing the most dreadful disasters upon society. It means that those institutions which have descended to us in actual practice from our ancestors come sanctioned by the *experience* of ages; and that they could not have stood so long a test unless they had been recommended, in some degree at least, by their utility. It is not that our ancestors were wiser than we are; they were certainly less informed, and probably were, on that account, in the general case, less judicious. But time has swept away their follies, which were doubtless great enough, as it has done the worthless ephemeral literature with which they, as we, were overwhelmed; and nothing has stood the test of ages, and come down to us through a series of generations, of their ideas or institutions, but what had some utility in human feelings and necessities, and was on the whole expedient at the time when it arose. Its utility may have ceased by the change of manners or of the circumstances of society—that may be a good reason for cautiously modifying or altering it—but rely upon it, it was once useful if it has existed long; and the presumption of present and continuing utility requires to be strongly outweighed by forcible

* Mr James's *Preface to Mary of Burgundy.*

considerations before it is abandoned. Lord Bacon has told us, in words which can never become trite, so profound is their wisdom, that our changes, to be beneficial, should resemble those of time, which, though the greatest of all innovators, works out its alterations so gradually that they are never perceived. Guizot makes, in the same spirit, the following fine observation on the slow march of Supreme wisdom in the government of the world :—

" If we turn our eyes to history, we shall find that all the great developments of the human mind have turned to the advantage of society—all the great struggles of humanity to the good of mankind. It is not, indeed, immediately that these effects take place; ages often elapse, a thousand obstacles intervene, before they are fully developed; but when we survey a long course of ages we see that all has been accomplished. The march of Providence is not subjected to narrow limits; it cares not to develop to-day the consequences of a principle which it has established yesterday; it will bring them forth in ages, when the appointed hour has arrived; and its course is not the less sure that it is slow. The throne of the Almighty rests on time—it marches through its boundless expanse as the gods of Homer through space—it makes a step, and ages have passed away. How many ages elapsed, how many changes ensued, before the regeneration of the inner man, by means of Christianity, exercised on the social state its great and salutary influence! Nevertheless, it has at length succeeded. No one can mistake its effects at this time."—*Lecture* i. 24.

In surveying the progress of civilisation in modern as compared with ancient times, two features stand prominent as distinguishing the one from the other. These are the *church* and the *feudal system*. They were precisely the circumstances which gave the most umbrage to the philosophers of the eighteenth century, and which awakened the greatest transports of indignation among the ardent multitudes who, at its close, brought about the French Revolution. Very different is the light in which the eye of true philosophy, enlightened by the experience of their abolition, views these great distinctive features of modern society.

" Immense," says Guizot, " was the influence which the Christian church exercised over the civilisation of modern Europe. In the outset, it was an incalculable advantage to have a moral power, a power destitute of physical force, which reposed only on mental convictions and moral feelings, established amidst that deluge of physical force and selfish violence which overwhelmed society at that period. Had the Christian church not existed, the world would have been delivered over to the influence of physical strength, in its coarsest and most revolting form. It alone exercised a moral sway. It did more; it spread abroad the idea of a rule of obedience, a heavenly power, to which all human beings, how great soever, were subjected, and which was above all human laws. That of itself was a safeguard against the greatest evils of society; for it affected the minds of those by whom

they were brought about; it professed the belief—the foundation of the salvation of humanity—that there is above all existing institutions, superior to all human laws, a permanent and divine law, sometimes called Reason, sometimes Divine Command, but which, under whatever name it goes, is for ever the same.

"Then the church commenced a great work—the separation of the spiritual and temporal power. That separation is the origin of liberty of conscience; it rests on no other principle than that which lies at the bottom of the widest and most extended toleration. The separation of the spiritual and temporal power rests on the principle, that physical force is neither entitled to act, nor can ever have any lasting influence, on thoughts, conviction, truth; it flows from the eternal distinction between the world of thought and the world of action, the world of interior conviction and that of external facts. In truth, that principle of the liberty of conscience, for which Europe has combated and suffered so much, which has so slowly triumphed, and often against the utmost efforts of the clergy themselves, was first founded by the doctrine of the separation of the temporal and spiritual power, in the cradle of European civilisation. It is the Christian church which, by the necessities of its situation to defend itself against the assaults of barbarism, introduced and maintained it. The presence of a moral influence, the maintenance of a Divine law, the separation of the temporal and spiritual power, are the three great blessings which the Christian church has diffused in the dark ages over European society.

"The influence of the Christian church was great and beneficent for another reason. The bishop and clergy ere long became the principal municipal magistrates: they were the chancellors and ministers of kings—the rulers, except in the camp and the field, of mankind. When the Roman empire crumbled into dust, when the central power of the emperors and the legions disappeared, there remained, we have seen, no other authority in the state but the municipal functionaries. But they themselves had fallen into a state of apathy and despair; the heavy burdens of despotism, the oppressive taxes of the municipalities, the incursions of the fierce barbarians, had reduced them to despair. No protection to society, no revival of industry, no shielding of innocence, could be expected from their exertions. The clergy, again, formed a society within itself—fresh, young, vigorous, sheltered by the prevailing faith, which speedily drew to itself all the learning and intellectual strength that remained in the state. The bishops and priests, full of life and of zeal, naturally were recurred to in order to fill all civil situations requiring thought or information. It is wrong to reproach their exercise of these powers as an usurpation; they alone were capable of exercising them. Thus has the natural course of things prescribed for all ages and countries. The clergy alone were mentally strong and morally zealous: they became all-powerful. It is the law of the universe."—*Lecture* iii. 27, 31; *Civilisation Européenne.*

Nothing can be more just or important than these observations; and they throw a new and consoling light on the progress and ultimate destiny of European society. They are as original as they are momentous. Robertson, with his honest horror of the innumerable corruptions which, in the time of Leo X. and Luther, brought about the Reformation—Sismondi, with his natural detestation of a faith which had urged on the dreadful cruelties of the crusade of the Albigenses, and which produced the revocation of the

Edict of Nantes—have alike overlooked these important truths, so essential to a right understanding of the history of modern society. They saw that the arrogance and cruelty of the Romish clergy had produced innumerable evils in later times; that their venality in regard to indulgences and abuse of absolution had brought religion itself into discredit; that the absurd and incredible tenets which they still attempted to force on mankind, had gone far to alienate the intellectual strength of modern Europe, during the last century, from their support. Seeing this, they condemned it absolutely, for all times and in all places. They fell into the usual error of men in reasoning on former from their own times. They could not make "the past and the future predominate over the present." They felt the absurdity of many of the legends which the devout Catholics received as undoubted truths, and they saw no use in perpetuating the belief in them; and thence they conceived that they must always have been equally unserviceable, forgetting that the eighteenth was not the eighth century; and that, during the dark ages, violence would have rioted without control, if, when reason was in abeyance, knowledge scanty, and military strength alone in estimation, superstition had not thrown its unseen fetters over the barbarian's arms. They saw that the Romish clergy, during five centuries, had laboured strenuously, and often with the most frightful cruelty, to crush independence of thought in matters of faith, and chain the human mind to the tenets, often absurd and erroneous, of her Papal creed; and they forgot that, during five preceding centuries, the Christian church had laboured as assiduously to establish the independence of thought from physical coercion, and had alone kept alive, during the interregnum of reason, the sparks of knowledge and the principles of freedom.

In the same liberal and enlightened spirit, Guizot views the feudal system, the next grand characteristic of modern times.

"A decisive proof that, in the tenth century, the feudal system had become necessary, and was, in truth, the only social state possible, is to be found in the universality of its adoption. Universally, upon the cessation of barbarism, the feudal forms were adopted. At the first moment of barbarian conquest, men saw only the triumph of chaos. All unity, all general civilisation disappeared; on all sides society was seen falling to pieces;

and in its stead arising a multitude of little, obscure, isolated communities. This appeared to all the contemporaries nothing short of universal anarchy. The poets, the chroniclers of the time, viewed it as the approach of the end of the world. It was, in truth, the end of the ancient world; but the commencement of a new one, placed on a broad basis, and with large means of social improvement and individual happiness.

"Then it was that the feudal system became necessary, inevitable. It was the only possible means of emerging from the general chaos. The whole of Europe, accordingly, at the same time adopted it. Even those portions of society which were most strangers, apparently, to that system, entered warmly into its spirit, and were fain to share in its protection. The crown, the church, the communities, were constrained to accommodate themselves to it. The churches became suzerain or vassal; the burghs had their lords and their feuars; the monasteries and abbeys had their feudal retainers, as well as the temporal barons. Royalty itself was disguised under the name of a feudal superior. Everything was given in fief; not only lands, but certain rights flowing from them, as that of cutting wood, fisheries, or the like. The church made subinfeudations of their casual revenues, as the dues on marriages, funerals, and baptisms."

The establishment of the feudal system thus universally in Europe, produced one effect, the importance of which can hardly be exaggerated. Hitherto the mass of mankind had been collected under the municipal institutions which had been universal in antiquity, in cities, or wandered in vagabond hordes through the country. Under the feudal system these men lived isolated, each in his own habitation, at a great distance from each other. A glance will show that this single circumstance must have exercised on the character of society, and the course of civilisation, a preponderating influence; the government of society passed at once from the towns to the country—private took the lead of public property—private prevailed over public life. Such was the first effect, and it was an effect purely material, of the establishment of the feudal system. But other effects, of still greater consequence, followed, of a moral kind, which have exercised the most important effects on the European manners and mind.

"The feudal proprietor established himself in an isolated place, which, for his own protection, he rendered secure. He lived there, with his wife, his children, and a few faithful friends, who shared his hospitality, and contributed to his defence. Around the castle, in its vicinity, were established the farmers and serfs who cultivated his domain. In the midst of that inferior, but yet allied and protected population, religion planted a church, and introduced a priest. He was usually the chaplain of the castle, and at the same time the curate of the village; in subsequent ages these two characters were separated: the village pastor resided beside his church. This was the primitive feudal society—the cradle, as it were, of the European and Christian world.

"From this state of things necessarily arose a prodigious superiority on the part of the possessor of the fief, alike in his own eyes, and in the eyes of those who surrounded him. The feeling of individual importance, of personal freedom, was the ruling principle of savage life; but here a new feeling was introduced—the importance of a proprietor, of the chief of a family, of a master, predominated over that of an individual. From this situation arose an immense feeling of superiority—a superiority peculiar to the feudal ages, and entirely different from anything which had yet been experienced in the world. Like the feudal lord, the Roman patrician was the head of a family, a master, a landlord. He was, moreover, a religious magistrate, a pontiff in the interior of his family. He was, moreover, a member of the municipality in which his property was situated, and perhaps one of the august senate, which, in name at least, still ruled the empire. But all this importance and dignity was derived from without—the patrician shared it with the other members of his municipality—with the corporation of which he formed a part. The importance of the feudal lord, again, was purely individual—he owed nothing to another; all the power he enjoyed emanated from himself alone. What a feeling of individual consequence must such a situation have inspired—what pride, what insolence, must it have engendered in his mind! Above him was no superior of whose orders he was to be the mere interpreter or organ—around him were no equals. No all-powerful municipality made his wishes bend to its own—no superior authority exercised a control over his wishes; he knew no bridle on his inclinations, but the limits of his power, or the presence of danger.

"Another consequence, hitherto not sufficiently attended to, but of vast importance, flowed from this society.

"The patriarchal society, of which the Bible and the Oriental monuments offer the model, was the first combination of men. The chief of a tribe lived with his children, his relations, the different generations who have assembled around him. This was the situation of Abraham—of the patriarchs: it is still that of the Arab tribes which perpetuate their manners. The *clan*, of which remains still exist in the mountains of Scotland, and the *sept* of Ireland, is a modification of the patriarchal society; it is the family of the chief, expanded during a succession of generations, and forming a little aggregation of dependents, still influenced by the same attachments, and subjected to the same authority. But the feudal community was very different. Allied at first to the clan, it was yet, in many essential particulars, dissimilar. There did not exist between its members the bond of relationship; they were not of the same blood; they often did not speak the same language. The feudal lord belonged to a foreign and conquering, his serfs to a domestic and vanquished race. Their employments were as various as their feelings and their traditions. The lord lived in his castle, with his wife, his children, and relations; the serfs on the estate, of a different race, of different names, toiled in the cottages around. This difference was prodigious—it exercised a most powerful effect on the domestic habits of modern Europe. It engendered the attachments of home: it brought women into their proper sphere in domestic life. The little society of freemen, who lived in the midst of an alien race in the castle, were all in all to each other. No forum or theatres were at hand, with their cares or their pleasures; no city enjoyments were a counterpoise to the pleasures of country life. War and the chase broke in, it is true, grievously at times, upon this scene of domestic peace. But war and the chase could not last for ever; and, in the long intervals of undisturbed repose, family attachments formed the chief solace of life. Thus it was that WOMEN acquired their paramount influence—thence the manners of chivalry, and the gallantry of modern times; they were but an extension of the courtesy and habits of the castle. The word *courtesy* shows it—it was in the *court* of the castle that the habits it denotes were learned."—*Lecture* iv. 13, 17; *Civilisation Européenne.*

We have exhausted, perhaps exceeded, our limits ; and we have only extracted a few of the most striking ideas from the first hundred pages of one of Guizot's works : *ex uno disce omnes.* The translation of them has been an agreeable occupation for a few evenings ; but they awake one mournful impression—the voice which uttered so many noble and enlightened sentiments is now silent ; the genius which once cast abroad light on the history of man, is lost in the vortex of present politics. The philosopher, the historian, are merged in the statesman—the instructor of all in the governor of one generation. Great as have been his services, brilliant his course in the new career into which he has been launched, it is as nothing compared to that which he has left ; for the one confers present distinction, the other immortal fame.

THE ROMANTIC DRAMA

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Macaulay says that the object of the drama is the painting of the human heart; and, as that is portrayed by the events of a whole life, he concludes that it is by poets representing in a short space a long series of actions, that the end of dramatic composition is most likely to be attained. "The mixture," says he, "of tragedy and comedy, and the length and extent of the action, which the French consider as defects, is the chief cause of the excellence of our older dramatists. The former is necessary to render the drama a just representation of the world, in which the laughers and the weepers are perpetually jostling each other, in which every event has its serious and ludicrous side. The latter enables us to form an intimate acquaintance with characters with which we could not possibly become familiar during the few hours to which the unities restrict the poet. In this respect, the works of Shakspeare in particular are miracles of art. In a piece which may be read aloud in three hours, we see a character gradually unfold all its recesses to us. We see it change with the change of circumstances. The petulant youth rises into the politic and warlike sovereign. The profuse and courteous philanthropist sours at length into a hater and scorner of his kind. The tyrant is altered, by the chastening of affliction, into a pensive moralist. The veteran general, distinguished by coolness, sagacity, and self-command, sinks under a conflict between love strong as death, and jealousy cruel as the grave. The brave and loyal subject passes step by step to the excesses of human depravity. We trace his progress step by step, from the first dawnings of unlawful ambition, to the cynical melan-

choly of his impenitent remorse. Yet in these pieces there are no unnatural transitions. Nothing is omitted; nothing is crowded. Great as are the changes, narrow as is the compass within which they are exhibited, they shock us as little as the gradual alterations of those familiar faces which we see every evening and morning. The magical skill of the poet resembles that of the dervise in the *Spectator*, who condensed all the events of seven years into the single moment during which the king held his head under water."*

In this admirable passage, the principle on which the romantic drama rests is clearly and manfully stated; and it is on the possibility of effecting the object which is here so well described, that the whole question between it and the Greek unities depends. As we have decidedly embraced the opposite opinion, and regard, after much consideration, the adherence to the variety and license of the romantic drama as the main cause of the present degraded condition of our national theatre, we have prefaced our observations with a defence of the romantic drama by its ablest advocate, and shall now state the reasons which appear to us to be conclusive in favour of a different opinion.

The drama is part, and but a part, of the great effort of mankind for the representation of human character, passion, and event. Other sister arts—history, the historical romance, the epic poem — also aim in some degree, by different methods, at the same object; and it is by considering their different principles and necessary limitations, that the real rules of the drama will best be understood.

History, as all the world knows, embraces the widest range of human events. Confined to no time, restricted to no locality, it professes, in a comparatively short space, to portray the most extensive and important of human transactions. Centuries, even thousands of years, are sometimes, by its greatest masters, embraced within its mighty arms. The majestic series of Roman victories may occupy the genius of one writer: the fifteen centuries of its decline and fall be spanned by the powers of another. The vast annals of Mahommedan conquest, the long sway of the Papal dominion, present yet untrodden fields to future historical

* Macaulay's *Miscellaneous Essays*. Article *Dryden*.

effort.* But it is this very greatness and magnitude of his subject which presents the chief difficulty with which the historian has to contend. With the exception of a very few instances, such lengthened annals are necessarily occupied by a vast variety of characters, actions, states, and events, having little or no connexion with each other, scarcely any common object of union, and no thread by which the interest of the reader is to be kept up throughout. Thence it is that works of history are so generally complained of as dull; that, though they are more numerous than any other class of literary compositions, the numbers of them which are generally read is so extremely small. Enter any public library, you will see tens of thousands of historical works reposing in respectable dignity on the shelves. How many of them are generally studied, or have taken root by common consent in the minds of men? Not ten. Romance numbers its readers by hundreds, poetry by fifties, where history can with difficulty master one. This amazing difference is not owing to any deficiency of ability turned to the subject, or interest in the materials of which it is formed. It can never be supposed that men will be indifferent to the annals of their own fame, or that the groundwork of all human invention—real event—can be wanting in the means of moving the heart. It is the extraordinary difficulty of this branch of composition, owing to its magnitude and complication, which is the sole cause of the difference. The world will, perhaps, see another Homer before another Tacitus; a second Dante before a second Gibbon.

The Historical Romance is founded on history, but it differs from it in the most essential particulars, and is relieved from the principal difficulties with which the annalist of actual occurrences has to contend. It selects a particular period out of past time, and introduces the characters and events most remarkable for their interest, or the deep impress they have left on the minds of men. This is an immense advantage; for it relieves the writer from the great difficulty with which the general historian has to contend, and which, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred,

* Ranke's *History of the Popes* is a most valuable addition to historical knowledge; but no one will assign it a place beside Livy or Gibbon. The difference between the work itself, and Macaulay's essay upon it, sufficiently proves what a vast addition genius may yet make to the labours of the German annalist.

proves fatal to his success. Unity in the midst of confusion is given to his subject. Room is afforded for graphic painting, space for forcible delineations of character. It becomes possible to awaken interest, by following out the steps of individual adventure. Though the name of historical romance is not to be found in antiquity, the thing itself was far from being unknown. Its most charming biographies are little better than historical romances; at least they possess their charm, because they exhibit their unity. The *Cyropædia* of Xenophon, the *Lives* of Plutarch, many of the heart-stirring Legends of Livy, of the profound Sketches of the Emperors in Tacitus, are in truth historical romances under the name of histories or biography. The lives of eminent men owe their chief charm to the unity of the subject, and the possibility of strongly exciting the feelings, by strictly adhering to the delineation of individual achievement. So great is the weight of the load, crushing to the historian, which is thus taken from the biographer or writer of historical romance, that second-rate genius can effect triumphs in that department, to which the very highest mind alone is equal in general historical composition. No one would think of comparing the intellect of Plutarch with that of Tacitus; but, nevertheless, the *Lives* of the former will, to the end of the world, prove more generally attractive than the Annals of the latter. Boswell's mind was immeasurably inferior to that of Hume; but for one reader of the *History of England*, will be found ten of the *Life of Johnson*. Sir Walter Scott's *Life of Napoleon* does not prove that he was qualified to take a place among the great English historians; but, to the end of the world, Richard Cœur-de-Lion, Queen Mary, and Elizabeth will stand forth from his canvass more clearly than either from the rhetoric of Hume or the eloquence of Robertson.

The Epic Poem confines within still narrower limits the narration of human events. As it borrows the language and is clothed with the colours of poetry, so it is capable of rousing the feelings more powerfully than either biography or romance, and, when crowned with success, attains a fame and takes a hold of the hearts of men to which nothing in prose composition can be compared. Elevation of thought, fervour of language, powerful delineation of character, are

its essential qualities. But all these would prove unavailing if the one thing needful, *unity of subject*, is awanting. It is that which is its essential quality, for it alone lets in all the others. All the great Epic poems which have appeared in the world are not only devoted to one interest, but are generally restricted, in point of space and time, within limits not materially wider than those of the Greek drama. The *Iliad* not only relates exclusively the latter stages of the siege of Troy, but the whole period of its action is forty-eight days—of its absorbing interest, (the time from the storming of the Greek lines by Hector to his death by the heaven-defended Achilles,) thirty-six hours. The *Paradise Lost* adheres strictly to unity both of subject and time : the previous battles of the angels is the subject of narrative by the angel Raphael ; but the time that elapsed from the convocation of the devils in Pandemonium to the expulsion of Adam and Eve from Paradise is only three days. The *Jerusalem Delivered* has the one absorbing interest arising from the efforts of the Christians for the deliverance of the Holy Sepulchre ; and its time is limited to a few weeks. Virgil was so enamoured of his great predecessor that he endeavoured to imitate, in one poem, both his great works. The *Æneid* is an *Iliad* and *Odyssey* in one. But every one must feel that it is on the episode with Dido that the interest of the poem really rests ; and that all the magic of his exquisite pencil can scarcely sustain the interest after the pious Æneas has taken his departure from the shores of Carthage. The *Lusiad* of Camoens, in which the perilous voyage of Vasco di Gama is narrated, necessarily from its subject embraced wider limits ; but the one interest of the poem is as single and sustained as that of the discovery of the New World by Columbus. If any of these writers had professed in rhyme to give a history of a more extensive or protracted subject, the interest would have been so much diffused as to be lost. The genius of Homer would have sunk under the effort to make an epic poem of the conquests of Alexander ; that of Milton broken down had he attempted in blank verse to narrate the campaigns of Napoleon. The confusion of ideas and incidents so painfully felt by all the readers of *Orlando Furioso*, and which the boundless fancy of Ariosto was unable to prevent, proves that epic poetry

has its limits, and that they are narrower than either history or romance.

What epic poetry is to romance or biography, THE DRAMA is to epic poetry. As the former selects from the romance of history its most interesting and momentous events, and makes them the subject of brilliant description, of impassioned rhetoric, so the latter chooses from the former its most heart-stirring episodes, and brings them in actual dialogue and representation before the mind of the spectator. Immense is the effect of this concentration—still more marvellous that of the personation with which it is attended. Imagination assumes the form of actual beings; conception of reality. The airy visions of the past are clothed in flesh and blood. The marvels of acting, scenery, and stage effect, come to add to the pathos of incident, to multiply tenfold the charms of poetry. It is impossible to conceive intellectual enjoyment carried beyond the point it attained, when the magic of Shakspeare's thought and language was enhanced by the power of Siddons' or Kemble's acting, or is now personified by the witchery of Helen Faucit's conceptions. But to the full effect of this combination, it is indispensable that the principles of dramatic composition be observed, and the stage kept within its due limits, more contracted, in point of time and place, than either romance or epic poetry. Within those bounds it is omnipotent, and produces an impression to which, while it lasts, none of the sister arts can pretend. Beyond them it never fails to break down, and not only ceases to interest, but often becomes to the last degree wearisome and exhausting.

It is the combination of powers, required for excellence on the stage, that renders it so rare: to form an adequate and correct conception of the proper representation of the leading characters in the master-pieces of Sophocles, Shakspeare, or Schiller, requires a mind scarcely inferior to that of the original poets themselves. The performer must throw himself, as it were, into the mind of the author; identify himself with the character to be represented; conceive it in manner as the poet had portrayed it in words; and then convey, by acting, this *second conception* to the spectators. By this double distillation of thought through the soul of genius, a finer and more perfect creation is some-

times formed than the efforts of any single mind, how great soever, could originally have formed. It may well be doubted, whether Shakspeare's original conception of Lady Macbeth or Desdemona was as perfect as Mrs Siddons' personation of them; or whether the grandeur of Cato or Coriolanus, as they existed in the original mind of Addison or the patriarch of the English stage, equalled Kemble's inimitable performance of them. Beautiful as were the visions of Juliet and Rosalind which floated before the mind of the Bard of Avon, it may be doubted whether they equalled Miss O'Neil's or Miss Helen Faucit's exquisite representation of these characters. The actor or actress brings to the illustration of the great efforts of dramatic genius qualities of a different sort, in addition to those which at first pervaded the mind of the author, but in harmony with them, and not less essential to the realisation of his conception. Physical beauty, the magic of voice, look, and manner, the play of countenance, the witchery of love, the step of grace, combine, with the glance of indignation, the accents of despair, to add a tenfold attraction to the creations of fancy. All the arts seem, in such representations, to combine their efforts to entrance the mind: every avenue to the heart is at once flooded with the highest, the most refined enjoyment, often with the noblest, the most elevated feelings.

> "For ill can poetry express
> Full many a reach of thought sublime;
> And painting, mute and motionless,
> Steals but a glance of time:
> But by the mighty actor brought,
> Illusion's perfect transports come;
> Verse ceases to be airy thought,
> And sculpture to be dumb."

But notwithstanding the extraordinary effect of dramatic representation in the hands of its greatest performers, nothing is more certain than that, in general, it proves a failure. It is not difficult to see to what this general failure of the drama is due. It arises from the impossibility of awakening interest without attending to unity of emotion; of keeping alive attention without continuity of incident; of making the story intelligible without simplicity of action. Dramatic authors, actors, and actresses, how gifted soever

in other respects, are the worst possible judges on this subject. They are so familiar with the story, from having composed the piece themselves, or made it the subject of frequent repetition or rehearsal, that they can form no conception of the difficulty which nine-tenths of the audience, to whom the piece is entirely strange, experience in understanding the plot, or acquiring any interest in the incidents or development of the piece. It may safely be affirmed, that a vast majority of the spectators of the dramas now habitually represented, with the exception of a few of Shakspeare's, which have become as household words on the English stage, never understand anything of the story till the end of the third act, and are only beginning to take an interest in the piece when the curtain falls. Dramatic authors and performers would do well to ponder on this observation; they may rely upon it, that it furnishes the key to the present degraded state of the English drama.

It is not mere stupidity on the part of the audience which occasions this. So complicated is the story, so lengthened the succession of events, in most of our modern theatrical pieces, that the most acute understanding, fortified by the most extensive practice, requiring alertness of intellect, will long be at fault in comprehending them. We have seen many a barrister famed for cross-examination on the north circuit unable to comprehend, till the piece was half over, the drift of Sheridan Knowles's dramas. Is it surprising, when this is the case, that the vast majority of the audience complain of weariness in the representation, and that the managers of theatres, sensible of this difficulty, are fain to eke out the proper interest of the drama by the meretricious aids of scenery, and dancing, and decorations?

What is constantly complained of by all classes at the theatre is, that it is so tiresome; that the back is broken by sitting without a support; that they cannot comprehend the story; that they do not understand what it is all about; and that the performance is infinitely too long. This last observation is undoubtedly frequently well founded; nowhere is the truth of old Hesiod's maxim, that a half is often greater than the whole, more frequently exemplified than in dramatic representations. But still the fact of the complaint being so universally made, and equally by all classes,

is very remarkable, and pregnant with instruction as to the limits of the drama, and the causes of the decline of its popularity, so painfully conspicuous in the British empire. No one complains of weariness at a trial for murder; on the contrary, all classes, and *especially the lowest*, will sit at such, to them, heart-stirring scenes, without feeling fatigue, for ten, twelve, sometimes eighteen hours consecutively. Nor can it be affirmed that this is because the interest is real; that the life of a human being is at stake. Every day's experience proves that fiction, when properly managed, is more interesting than reality. The vast multitude of novels which yearly issue from the press, the eagerness with which they are sought after by all classes, the extraordinary extent of their circulation, sufficiently proves this. No one complains that the best romances of Sir Walter Scott or Bulwer are too long; on the contrary, they are generally felt to be too short; and those who are loudest in their declamations against the intolerable fatigue of the theatre, will sit for days together with their feet at the fire, devouring indifferent novels.

The general complaint now made in Great Britain against the tedium of theatrical representations, was unknown in other ages and countries. The passion of the Greeks for their national theatre is well known, and the matchless perfection of their great dramatists proves to what a degree it is capable of rousing the human mind. It was a subject of complaint against Æschylus, that he threw many of his audience into convulsions, by the terrible power of his lyric poetry. The French, prior to the Revolution, were passionately fond of the drama, which was then entirely founded on the Greek model. The decline complained of in the Parisian theatre has been contemporary with the introduction of the Romantic school. In Italy, it is, with the opera, the chief, almost the sole public amusement. There is not a city with forty thousand inhabitants in the classic peninsula that has not a theatre and opera, superior to anything to be met with in the British islands out of London. The theatre is in high favour in Germany and Russia. Complaints, indeed, are frequently made, that the drama is declining on the Continent; and the present state of the lesser Parisian theatres certainly affords no indication that,

in departing from the old landmarks and bringing romance on the stage, they have either preserved its purity or extended its influence. But the decline of the theatre is far greater and more remarkable in England than in any of the Continental states. It has indeed gone so far as to induce a serious apprehension among many well-informed persons that it will cease to exist, and the country of Shakspeare and Garrick, of Kemble and Siddons, be left altogether without a theatre at which the legitimate drama is represented. Such a result in a country overflowing, in the great cities and metropolis at least, with riches, and passionately desirous of every species of enjoyment, is very remarkable, and deserving of the most serious consideration. It may well make us pause in our career, and consider whether the course we have been pursuing has, or has not, been likely to lead to perfection and success in this noble and important branch of composition.

We have stated what are the limits of the drama, and what part is assigned to it in the general effort of the human mind to portray events, or paint the human heart. Macaulay has explained, in the passage already quoted, what the Romantic drama proposes to do, and the reason why, in his estimation, it is more likely to attain its end than the more limited action of the theatre of the Greeks. The whole question comes to be, which of the two systems is best adapted to attain the undoubted end of all dramatic composition, the painting of the human heart in its most moving and interesting situations ? If he is right in the views he has so well expressed, it is very singular how it has happened, that in a country which, for the last three centuries, has constantly adhered to these ideas, and worked out the Romantic drama with extraordinary zeal and vigour, dramatic representations should have been constantly declining, so as at length to be threatened with total extinction. This becomes the more remarkable when it is recollected, that in other countries, inferior in wealth, genius, and energy to Great Britain, but where the old system has been adhered to, it is still flourishing in undiminished vigour, and that decay in them has uniformly been co-existent with the entry on the stage of Romantic representation. Racine, Corneille, Voltaire in France, and Metastasio and Alfieri in Italy ; Schiller and

Goethe in Germany, have nobly upheld the legitimate drama in their respective countries. Still more extraordinary is it, if these views be the correct ones, that while, by the marvels of one heaven-born genius, the Romantic drama was in the days of Queen Elizabeth raised to the very highest perfection in this country, it has since continually languished, and cannot from his day number one name destined for immortality among its votaries.

It is said in answer to this obvious objection to the Romantic drama, founded on its fate in all the countries where it has been established, that it shares in this respect only in the common destiny of mankind in creating works of imagination; that the period of great and original conception is the first only—that Homer was succeeded by Virgil, Æschylus by Euripides, Dante by Tasso, Shakspeare by Pope, and that the age of genius in all countries is followed by that of criticism.* There can be no doubt that this observation is, in many respects, well founded; but it affords no solution of the causes of the present degraded condition of our national drama, nor does it explain the course it has taken in this country. We have made a progress, but it has not been from originality to taste, but from genius to folly. The age of Æschylus has not with us been succeeded by that of Sophocles and Euripides, but by that of Nero and the amphitheatre. We have not advanced from the wildness of conception to the graces of criticism, but from the rudeness of some barbaric imagination to the cravings of corrupted fancy. The age of Garrick has been with us succeeded, not by that of Roscius, but by that of Cerito; the melodrama of the opera, the dancing of Carlotta Grisi, have banished tragedy from the boards trod by Kemble and Siddons. The modern dramas which have been published, and in part appeared on the stage, have in no respect been distinguished by more correct taste, or a stricter adherence to rule, than those of Ford and Massinger, of Beaumont and Fletcher, of Jonson and Shakspeare. They have discarded, indeed, the indecency which forms so serious a blot on our older dramatists, but, in other respects, they have faithfully followed out their principles. The drama still, as in earlier days, professes to exhibit in a few hours a

* Macaulay's *Essays*. Article, *Dryden*.

representation of the principal events of a lifetime. Time and place are set at naught, as they were by the bard of Avon, and not unfrequently the last act opens at the distance of years, or hundreds of miles from the first. We need only mention the ablest and most popular of our modern dramas—*The Lady of Lyons*, by Bulwer, and the best of his theatrical pieces, by Sheridan Knowles, for a confirmation of these observations. But no one will pretend that the dramatic works of these writers, able in many respects as they are, can be set off against the masterpieces of the Greek or French drama which succeeded the days of Æschylus and Corneille.

Again, it is said, and very commonly too, as an explanation of the extraordinary failure of striking dramatic genius since the days of Queen Elizabeth in this country, that originality and greatness can be reached only once in the lifetime of a nation ; that we have had our Shakspeare as Greece had its Homer, and that we should be content ; and that it is the necessary effect of superlative excellence in the outset, to extinguish rivalry and induce mediocrity in the end. The observation is plausible ; and it has been so frequently made, that it has passed with many into a sort of axiom. But when tried by the only test of truth in human affairs—that of experience—it entirely fails. Past history affords no countenance to the idea, that early greatness extinguishes subsequent emulation, or that superlative genius in one department is fatal to subsequent perfection in it. On the contrary, it creates it. It is by the collision of one great mind with another, that the greatest achievements of the human mind have been achieved : often the chain continues from one age and nation to another ; but it is never snapped asunder. Homer did not extinguish Virgil ; on the contrary, he created him. The admiration of Sophocles for Æschylus gave birth to the *Œdipus Tyrannus;* Euripides wept with generous hopelessness of imitation, when he heard the tragedies of Sophocles recited at the Isthmian games. The greatness of Livy did not paralyse the hand of Tacitus; nor the eloquence of Demosthenes extinguish the voice of Æschines. Dante worshipped Virgil with an idolatrous affection ; but the greatness of the master did not destroy the pupil. The originality and power of the *Inferno* neither

checked the exuberant flow of Ariosto's imagination, nor the generous glow of Tasso's feelings. The bold conceptions of Michael Angelo warmed into life the exquisite genius of Raphael: the paintings of the Caracci made the youthful Correggio say—"I, too, am a painter." Has poetry declined in Great Britain since it was brought to its greatest perfection by Milton; or tragedy in France since the great Corneille trod the stage with so noble a step? Let Pope and Dryden, Thomson and Gray, Burns and Scott, Byron and Wordsworth, Racine, Molière, and Voltaire, give the answer. Did Hume extinguish Gibbon; or Addison, Johnson; or the eloquence of Chatham prove fatal to the emulation of Pitt? Look around you, and it will universally be found that it is the collision of genius with genius which produces excellence; that the sacred fire transmitted is never lost. But Shakspeare has had no successor in this or any other country: he stands alone in unapproached grandeur.

Great efforts have been made in the most influential quarters in recent times to revive a taste for the old English dramatists in this country, but they met with no lasting success. Mr Fox was an extravagant admirer of Dryden, and so strongly did the feeling take root in his family, that not even the most favoured *habitué* of Holland House ventured to dissent from the opinion. Serjeant Talfourd, it is said, was once nearly shipwrecked there, by venturing to express some doubt on the subject. The merits of *Ion* were as nothing compared to such unpardonable heresy. The Whigs all embraced the same views; the *Edinburgh Review* for a long course of years sounded the praise of the old English drama; Ford and Ben Jonson, Massinger, and Beaumont and Fletcher, were perpetually the theme of their eulogium. Sir Walter Scott was so carried away by the stream, that he persuaded the Ballantynes thirty years ago to publish a handsome edition of Beaumont and Fletcher's plays, and the Whigs were to a great extent concussed into buying it. For a few years the richness, pathos, raciness, and depth of the old English dramatists were in all their mouths, and Ballantyne's edition in not a few of their libraries. But all would not do. The edition remained heavy stock. Lockhart's *Life*

of Scott tells what a woful concern it was: the book may now be purchased for a fifth of its original cost. Macaulay has loudly proclaimed the same principles, and lent them the aid of his varied learning and fascinating eloquence. But it is in vain to struggle against a decided opinion of the human race. Neither Holland House nor the *Edinburgh Review* can make men permanently overlook the glaring defects of the old English drama, apart from Shakspeare. Its extravagance, its conceits, its indecency, its constant delineation of profligate characters, have blinded men, and blinded them justly, to its vigour, its variety, its exquisite occasional beauty. Real excellence needs no bolstering. Holland House is not required to keep Milton or Pope afloat; the fame of Homer is greater than it was two thousand years ago; every successive generation is charmed by the delicacy of Virgil's taste, and fascinated by the vigour of Dante's conceptions.

These considerations are fitted to cast a serious doubt on the question, how far the true principles of the drama are those which have been embraced by the English school, and may lead us to consider whether the acknowledged inferiority of our tragic writers, since the time of Shakspeare, is not in reality to be ascribed to his transcendent genius having led them astray from the true principles of the art. It will be considered in the sequel, to what cause *his* acknowledged success has been owing, and whether his finest dramas, those which chiefly retain their popularity, are not in reality constructed on the Grecian model. But, in the mean time, let it be considered what in reality the drama can do, and what limits are imposed upon it, not by the arbitrary rules of critics, but by the lasting nature of things.

The drama is restricted by the well-known limits of human patience to a representation of three hours. Experience has everywhere proved that the greatest genius, both in the poet and performer, cannot keep alive interest, or avert weariness, beyond that period. The spectators sit still in their places the whole time. Whatever changes of scene or external objects to look at are introduced, the audience themselves are motionless. It is to persons thus situated, and within this time, that theatrical representa-

tions are addressed. They expect, and with reason, to be amused and interested in comedy—moved and melted in tragedy. It is for this they go to the theatre—for this they pay their money. Writers and actors are equally aware that this is the case. Then what course do the Greek and the Romantic school respectively follow to attain this object?

Both in some respects follow the same course, or rather both make use, for the main part, of the same materials. It is universally acknowledged, that it is essential to the success of the drama, in all its branches, that the plot be interesting, the characters forcible, the ideas natural, the attention constantly kept up. In tragedy, by far its noblest department, it is indispensable, in addition, that the feelings should be vehemently excited in the spectators, and the human heart laid bare, by the most violent passions, in the characters on the stage. Aristotle expressly says, that it is the delineation of passions which is the object of tragedy. In order to achieve this object, all are agreed that some permanent characters must be selected, generally from those known to history, to whom striking and tragic events have occurred; and it is in the delineation of the passions which those events excite, and the interest they awaken in the breast of the spectators, that the art of the writer consists. So far both parties are agreed; but they differ widely in the methods which they respectively take to attain this object.

The Romantic dramatist, overstepping the bounds of time and place, professes in three hours to portray the principal events of years—it may be of a whole lifetime. He selects the prominent events of his hero's or heroine's career—the salient angles, as it were, of human existence—and brings them forward in different scenes of his brief representation. Years often intervene between the commencement of his piece and its termination: the spectator is transported hundreds, it may be thousands of miles, by a mere mechanical sleight-of-hand in the scene-shifter, or between the acts. The piece may begin at Rome and end at Philippi; it may open on a heath in Morayshire, and close at Dunsinane Castle, near the Tay. Seventeen years may elapse, as in one of Shakspeare's, between the

third and fourth act; five between the first and second. The drama, constructed on these principles, does not represent a short period, into which the crisis, as it were, of a whole lifetime is concentrated; but it gives sketches of the whole life itself, from the commencement of its eventful period, to its termination. The poet chooses the most exciting scenes out of the three volumes of the historical novel, and brings these scenes on the stage in a few hours. As the drama, constructed on this principle, professes to portray the changes of real life, so it admits, it is thought, of that intermixture of the serious and the comic, which the actual world exhibits; and willingly transports the spectator from the most highly wrought scenes of passion, the deepest accents of woe, to the burlesque of extravagant characters, or the picture of vulgar life. This is deemed admissible, because it is natural; and certainly no one can have gone from the drawing-room, or the library, to the stage-coach or the steam-boat, without seeing that it exhibits at least a true picture of the varied phantasmagoria which existence presents.

The Greek dramatists, and their successors in modern Europe, proceed upon an entirely different principle. Having made their selection of the characters and the events on which their piece is to be constructed, they pitch upon that period in their progress in which matters were brought to a crisis, and, for good or for evil, their destiny was accomplished. Having done this, they portray the minutest incidents of that brief period with the utmost care, and exert all their strength on the graphic painting on which every artist knows the awakening of interest is almost entirely dependant. The previous history of the principal personages is described in dialogue at the commencement of the piece, so as to make the spectators aware both of the great lives of the characters which are brought before them, and of the antecedent events which had brought matters to their present crisis. Having carried them to this point, the crisis itself is portrayed at full length, and with all the power and pathos of which the artist is capable. The poet does not pretend to narrate the campaign from its commencement to its termination: he commences his piece with the beginning of the last battle,

and exerts all his strength in painting the decisive charge. He does not give the voyage from its commencement to its termination, with its long periods of monotonous weariness: he confines himself to the brief and terrible scene of the shipwreck. As the crisis and catastrophe of life is thus alone represented, and everything depends on the interest excited by its development, so nothing is admitted which can disturb the unity of the emotion, or interrupt the flow of the sympathy which it is the great object of the piece from first to last to awaken.

If it were *possible* to create the same interest, or delineate character and passion as completely, by brief and consequently imperfect sketches of a whole lifetime, as it is by a minute and glowing representation of its most eventful period, much might be advanced with justice in favour of the Romantic school of the drama. Our objection is, that this is impossible; and that the failure of the English theatre, since the time of Shakspeare, is entirely to be ascribed to this impossibility. And the impossibility is owing to the length of time which it requires, by narrative or representation, to kindle that warm and glowing image, or awaken those ardent feelings in the mind of another, upon which the emotion of taste and the success of all the Fine Arts depend.

In the arts which address themselves to the *eye*, and to the heart through it, it is possible to produce a very strong impression almost instantaneously. A beautiful woman has only to be seen to be admired; a charming landscape bursts upon the sight with immediate and almost magical force. The impression produced by the finest objects in Europe—the sun setting on the Jungfrauhorn, the interior of St Peter's, the fall of Schaffhausen, the view from the Acropolis of Athens, Constantinople from the Seraglio Point, the bay of Naples from the Belvidere, for example—is such, that though seen *only* for a few minutes, it may almost be said seconds, an impression is made, a picture is painted, on the mind's retina, which can never be effaced. Painting, as it imitates external nature, so shares in the rapidity and, in the hands of great masters, durability of its impressions. Sculpture and architecture have the same advantage. Yet even in these arts, the productions of which require only to be seen to be admired, it is well known that the impression, strong

as it is at first, is, with all persons of a cultivated mind, greatly increased by repeated inspections. The common observation, that a fine painting or statue grows upon you the oftener you see it, and that "Time but the impression deeper makes," sufficiently proves that it is not at once, even in those arts which speak at once to the eye, that the soul of the artist is transferred to that of the spectator.

But the case is entirely different with those arts—such as history, romance, epic poetry, or the drama—which do not at once produce a visible object to the mind, but give descriptions or dialogues by which the reader or spectator is required to form a *mental* object or awaken a mental interest of his own creation, though from the materials furnished, and under the guidance of the genius of the artist. It is not instantaneously that this can be done: on the contrary, it is by very slow degrees, and many successive efforts, that the inward picture is created in the mind, the absorbing interest awakened in the heart, which gives the pleasure or rouses the sympathy which it is the object of the writer to communicate. A very little reflection will be sufficient to show that this observation is well founded, in all the arts of narrative or description. And nothing, we apprehend, can be clearer than that the Romantic Drama has failed because it professes, within limits, and by means which render the attempt hopeless, to excite this interest.

Notwithstanding the well-known and proverbial dulness of history, there are many historical compositions which do succeed in awakening a durable and sometimes absorbing interest in the mind of the reader. Probably few works professedly addressed to the imagination have awakened in many breasts so deep and lasting an interest as the narrative of Livy, the biography of Tacitus, the pictured page of Gibbon. Such works are almost always complained of as dull at first; but the interest gradually waxes warmer as the narrative proceeds; the feelings become roused on one side, or in favour of one hero or another, in the great drama of the world; and not unfrequently in the end the most attractive works of imagination are laid aside for the annals of real events. But how is it that this interest is awakened? By the study of months, sometimes of years; by an interest produced by the reading of a whole winter by the fireside.

Let any man try, in a narrative of *long*-continued historical events, to excite a deep interest in a space which can be read *in three hours*, and the powers of Tacitus or Gibbon would at once fail in the attempt. It is quite possible in that brief period to awaken the deepest interest in a single or closely connected series of events, as a battle, a siege, a revolt, a shipwreck; but wholly impossible to do so with incidents scattered over a long course of years.

The interest so generally felt in epic poetry and romance is excited in the same way, though in a much shorter period. As the colours of these species of composition are more brilliant, the feelings more chastened, the events more select, the characters more prominent, the catastrophe more rapidly brought about, than in real life, so the artist has the means, in a much shorter period, of awakening the interest upon the growth of which the success of his work is chiefly dependant. But nevertheless, even there, it is by comparatively slow degrees, and by reading for a very considerable period, that the interest is created. It is wholly impossible to produce it, or make the story or the characters intelligible, in a few hours. Every scholar recollects the delight with which his mind grew, as it were, under the fire of Homer's conceptions, his taste matured under the charm of Virgil's feeling; but none will pretend that the intense delight he felt could be awakened, if he had read extracts of their most brilliant passages in a few hours: this pleasure was the feast, his interest the growth, of weeks and months. No reader of Tasso, Milton, or Klopstock, for the first time, would think he could acquire an interest in the *Jerusalem Delivered*, the *Paradise Lost*, or the *Messiah* between tea and supper. Many of their finest passages might be read in that brief space, and their beauty *as pieces of poetry* fully appreciated; but it would be wholly impossible in so short a time to awaken an interest in the whole story, or the fate of the principal characters. Nevertheless it would be quite possible, in that period, to excite the deepest sympathy with some of their most striking events or episodes *taken singly*—as the parting of Hector and Andromache, or the death of the Trojan hero, in the *Iliad;* the love of Dido for Æneas, or the catastrophe of Nisus and Euryalus, in the *Æneid;* the death of Clorinda, or the flight of Erminia, in the *Jerusalem Delivered.* The

reason is, that it is possible in a short space to point a single catastrophe with such force and minuteness as to excite the warmest sympathy, but wholly impossible to effect that object within such limits, with a long series of consecutive events.

Again, look at the historical romance or the common novel. No one needs to be told how deep and universal is the interest which the masterpieces in that department awaken. Whatever may be said as to the decline of the public taste for the drama, most certainly there is no symptom of any abatement in the general interest awakened by works of fiction; but that interest is of comparatively slow growth. It would be impossible to produce it in a few hours. It is excited by the reading of three evenings by the fireside. No one would deem it possible to awaken the interest, or make the characters intelligible, in three hours. The experiment may very easily be made. Let any one take up one of the most popular novels we possess—*Ivanhoe*, *Waverley*, *Rienzi*, *Ernest Maltravers*, *Attila*, *Philip Augustus*, *the Deerslayer*, *the Last of the Mohicans*, *the Last of the Barons*, or *Harold*, and read two or three chapters out of each volume, such as might be concluded between seven and ten, to a circle of persons previously unacquainted with these works, and see in what state they are when the intellectual feast has terminated. The theatre always contains a large majority of persons who have not previously witnessed the performance, and are ignorant of the plot.

It is true that to the aid of six or eight chapters culled out of three volumes, the Romantic dramatist brings the auxiliaries of acting, scenery, and stage effect; but that adds little to the power of exerting deep sympathy or powerful emotion. Such feelings cannot be awakened without minute painting and continuity of action, and they are excluded by the very nature of the Romantic drama. That species of composition proposes to give a picture of the principal events of a long period, as the peristrephic panorama does of the chief scenes of a great space, as the whole course of the Rhine or the Danube. Every one knows how inferior the interest it excites is to those in which the whole skill of the artist and outlay of the proprietor have been exerted on a single picture, as the original round one of Barker and

Burford. The art of panoramic painting has signally receded, since the moving panorama has been substituted for the fixed one. A series of galloping lithographic sketches of Italy, however highly coloured or skilfully drawn, will never paint that lovely peninsula like a single sunset of Claude in the bay of Naples. Claude himself could not do so in his varied sketches, graphic and masterly as they are. The Romantic drama is the *Liber Veritatis;* the Greek drama is the finished Claude in the Doria Palace or the National Gallery. Few persons will hesitate to say which excites the strongest admiration, which they would rather possess.

Performers on the stage are very naturally led to form an erroneous opinion on this subject. Many of the most captivating qualities they possess are seen at once. Physical beauty, elegance of manner, a noble air, a majestic carriage, a lovely figure, a bewitching smile, produce their effect instantaneously. No one needs to be told how quickly and powerfully they speak to the heart, how warmly they kindle the imagination. But that admiration is *personal* to the artist; it does not extend to the piece, nor can it overcome its imperfections. It gives pleasure often of the very highest kind; but it is a pleasure very different from the true interest of dramatic representation, and cannot be relied on to sustain the interest of an audience for a long period. It is where these powers of the performer are exerted on a drama constructed on its true principles, that the full delight of the theatre is felt. No talents in the performer can sustain a faulty piece. We cannot sit three hours merely to admire the most beautiful and gifted actress that ever trod the boards. Mental sympathy, the rousing of the feelings is required, and that is mainly the work of the poet, or of the performer imbued with his spirit. We daily see masterpieces of the Romantic drama, sustained by the greatest ability on the stage, performed to empty benches. But the theatres were constantly crowded at Athens; the Théatre Français is never empty at Paris. We never saw a copy of Sir Walter Scott's novels at a circulating library, that was not thumbed and pulled about till it was ready to fall in pieces.

We are the more confirmed in the opinion that these are the true principles of dramatic composition, from observing

how generally they are applicable to the historical novel; how clearly they are illustrated by the decided verdict of public opinion pronounced on the works of the most popular writers in that species of composition. The three novels of Sir Walter Scott that are most admired, are *Ivanhoe*, *The Bride of Lammermoor*, and *The Abbot*. Well, these romances have the interest concentrated within the narrowest limits. *The Bride of Lammermoor* is a Greek drama in prose. It has its simplicity of story, unity of emotion, and terrible concluding catastrophe. *Lucia di Lammermoor*, performed with signal success in every opera of Europe, is a proof how easily it was dramatised. It is the *only one* of Sir Walter's novels that, out of Scotland, where local feelings warp the judgment, has been durably successful on the stage. The principal events in *Ivanhoe* and *The Abbot* are each contracted within three days; the characters which interest in each, are only two or three in number. Look at Cooper. The great secret of his success is the minuteness and fidelity of his painting, and the graphic form with which heart-stirring events occurring within a very short period are painted. In the most admired of all his novels, *The Deerslayer*, the whole scene is laid on the borders of a single lake, and the interest arises from the adventures of two girls on its watery bosom. Events in *The Pathfinder*, *The Last of the Mohicans*, and *The Prairie*, are nearly as concentrated in point of time and characters, though, as the story depends in each on the adventures of a party on a journey, a considerable transference of place is of course introduced. The *Promessi Sposi* of Manzoni has acquired a European reputation, and every reader of it knows how entirely its interest is dependant on the unity of interest and extraordinary fidelity and skill with which, within narrow limits, the characters, events, and still life, are portrayed.

In those romances again, and they are many, in which great latitude in the unities has been taken, it is very rarely that the skill of the artist has succeeded in preventing a painful break in the interest, or cessation in the sympathy, where any considerable transposition of place or overleaping of time occurs. It is very frequent in James's novels to see this done; but we believe he never yet had a reader in whom it did not excite a feeling of regret. When a chapter

begins—"We must now transport the reader to a distant part of the country"—or "Many years after the events detailed in the last chapter had occurred, two persons met in a hostelry on the side of a forest," &c., we may rely upon it that not only is the scene changed, but the interest, for the time at least, is lost. The pictures formed in the mind, the interest awakened in the events, the admiration felt for the characters, are alike at an end. The chain of sympathy is broken with the rupture of the continuity of events. The reader's mind sets out as it were on a new track, in which the sails must be spread and the oars worked afresh. Everything must be done over again; fresh pictures conjured up in the mind, new interests awakened in the breast from the last starting-point. But it is seldom that such new interests can supply the want of those which have been lost; or that, where such a system is adopted, even a sustained sympathy can be maintained throughout. We do not say that the first love is exclusive of any other; but only that the interest is not to be transferred from one to the other, until a considerable time has elapsed, and no small pains have been taken. Several such dislocations of place, or violations of time, will prove fatal to a novel, though written with the utmost ability, and managed in other respects with the most consummate skill. Every reader of Mr James's romances, which in many respects possess very high merits, must be sensible of the truth of this observation; and all the richness of colouring, and fidelity in drawing, in Sir L. Bulwer's splendid historical romance of *Rienzi,* the finest composition in that style in existence, cannot take away the painful impression produced by the long interval which elapses between the commencement of the story, where the characters first appear, its middle, where the real interest is developed, and its termination where the catastrophe occurs. It is on the centre, where unity of interest is strictly kept up, that the success of the work depends.

In the historical romance, however, such diffusion of the events over a long period, though extremely difficult to be managed, in consistence with the preservation of interest in the story, is adverse to no principle; because it is the very object of that species of mingled truth and fiction to narrate a lengthened course of events as they affected the history of

individual men ; and the only unity to which the author is restricted by the principles of his art is the unity of interest. But the curious thing is, that in the Romantic drama this difficulty is voluntarily undertaken when no necessity exists for its introduction ; nay, when the principles of the art, as evinced in the works of its greatest masters, forbid its adoption. What would the historian give to be able to dwell only on the brilliant episodes of his period—to be permitted to throw aside the long intervening years of monotony or prose, and dwell only on those where the poetry of existence is brought forth ? On what scenes does the romance writer dwell with transport—where does he paint with force and minuteness but in those incidents, generally few and far between in his volumes, which form the fit subject of dramatic composition ? The stage alone is relieved from the necessity of portraying the prosaic adjunct to poetic interest ; the dramatist only is permitted to select the decisive crisis—the burning incident of life—and present it with all the additions of poetry, music, scenery, and personation. Strange that, when thus relieved of the fetters which so grievously restrain the other species of human narrative, he should voluntarily choose to wear them ; that when at liberty to soar on the eagle's wing, he should gratuitously assume the camel's load !

In truth, the adoption of the Romantic style in theatrical composition, and the tenacity with which, despite centuries of failure, it is still adhered to by dramatic poets, is mainly to be ascribed to a secret sense of inability to work up the simpler drama of Greece with the requisite force and effect. Men distrust their own powers in awakening a continued interest for hours from one interest, or the portraying of a single catastrophe. They are fain to borrow the adventitious aid to be derived, as they think, from frequent changes of time and place. They rail at the drama of Athens, as many modern artists do at the paintings of Claude Lorraine, because they feel themselves unable to imitate them. They crowd their canvass with objects, from a secret sense of inability to finish any one with perfect force and fidelity. In that way they flatter themselves that the defects of their composition will be less strongly felt, and the audience will experience something like the enjoyment

of foreign travelling without any great trouble on the part of their conductor, from the brilliant succession of pictures which is presented to their intellectual vision. They forget only one thing, but it generally proves fatal to their whole undertaking. Foreign travelling is delightful; but it is only so when sufficient time is allowed to see the objects properly, and take in the impression. Without this, it is little more than a grievous fatigue, relieved by one or two splendid but fleeting pictures painted on the mind. The drama being limited to a three hours' representation, must portray the events of years, if it attempts it, at railway speed. Thence it is, that no greater pleasure is in general felt from its representations than from seeing the tops of villages or the steeples of churches fleeting past when travelling fifty miles an hour on the Great Western. If we would really enjoy nature, we must stop short and sketch one of them, and then we shall feel pleasure indeed.

It is a most grievous but unavoidable consequence of this original departure, as we deem it, from right principle in dramatic composition, that it leads by a natural and almost unavoidable transition to all the extravagances and meretricious aids, the presence of which has so long been felt as the chief disgraces of the British stage. As long as the unities of time and place are adhered to, the poet has no resource but in the force of character, the pathos of incident, the beauty of language. If he does not succeed in these, he is lost. But the moment that he feels himself at liberty to change the scene or time at pleasure, there is no end to the assistance which he will seek to derive from such adventitious support, how foreign soever to the real interest and true principles of his art. Frequent changes of scene, gorgeous pictures of buildings or scenery, brilliant exhibitions of stage effect, processions, battles, storming of castles, the clang of trumpets, the clashing of swords, the discharge of firearms, are all resorted to in order to save the trouble of thought, or conceal mediocrity of conception. It may be that such exhibitions are very attractive, that they draw full houses of children, or of men and women with the minds of children —no small portion of the human race. But no one will assert that they are the drama, any more than that name belonged to the exhibitions of lions or cameleopards in the

Roman amphitheatre. But the Romantic drama, by the unbounded latitude in point of time, place, and incident which it permits, opens the door to all these substitutes for genius which the great drama, by excluding them, kept carefully closed. Therefore it is that the corruption of taste has been much more rapid and irremediable in the countries by whom it has been adopted, than in those in which the old landmarks were adhered to; and that in the latter the taste for extravagance in the public, and the degradation in the character of dramatic composition, has always been contemporary with the introduction of the Romantic style on the theatre.

To see to what the Romantic style leads, we have only to look at the dramatic pieces founded on the favourite works of fiction which have recently appeared in England and France. Dramas in both countries have been formed on the stories of the most popular novels of Scott, Bulwer, Victor Hugo, Janin, and Eugene Sue. What success have they had? What sort of things are they? We pass over the horrors, the indecency, adulterous incest, and murders of the modern French drama, founded on the romances of these popular and imaginative novelists, and come to the dramas founded on our own great romance writers, against whom no such charges can be brought, and the original plots of which have been constructed with the utmost talent by the greatest master of prose fiction the world ever saw. What has been the fate of the dramas of *Ivanhoe*, *The Antiquary*, *Guy Mannering*, *Rob Roy*, or Sir Walter's other popular novels? With the exception of the lowest class of Scotch audiences, who roar on the representations of Dandie Dinmont, Bailie Nicol Jarvie, or the like, it may safely be affirmed that they have everywhere proved entire failures. The talent of a popular actress may for a time keep some of them up; but left to themselves, they have everywhere sunk to the ground. The reason is evident. The story is so complicated, and leaps so from one thing to another, from a desire to skim over the whole novel, that, except to those who have the original by heart, it is absolutely unintelligible. As to awakening interest, the thing is out of the question—it cannot even be understood but by referring to the original work. What would the inhabitants of New

Zealand make of such dramatised romances if revived in their theatres two thousand years hence, as *Antigone* has lately been with such brilliant effect in these islands? The experiment will never be made, for not one of them will survive ten years. Yes! there *is one*—*Lucia de Lammermoor* —which will be a favourite subject for the drama to the end of time; for the original story, as already observed, is just a Greek drama in prose. But all the genius of Scott, second neither to that of Æschylus or Sophocles in invention, could not render his brilliant romances fit, with that exception, for the stage, because their construction is at variance with the principles of dramatic composition.

It is said that the sketch of a whole lifetime, or of many years, is essential to the true development of character, which it is the great end of the drama to exhibit, because it is by the varied events of so long a period that we are made acquainted with it in real life. Here again we join issue with our opponents, and do most confidently maintain that the Greek drama, which professes to paint the heart by the paroxysms of passion it undergoes in the crisis of its fate, is much more likely to do it faithfully and effectually than the Romantic, which portrays the events of a whole lifetime. When it is said that the object of the drama is to paint the human heart, a distinction must be made. The heart may become known by ordinary life or moments of crisis, by its habitual turn or impassioned scenes. The novelist, who portrays a whole life, may delineate it in the first way; but the dramatic poet, who is limited to a representation of three hours, must of necessity embrace the latter. But if the delineation of the heart by its expressions or sufferings in moments of passion, when it is laid bare by the vehemence of emotions, be the end in view, it must at once be evident that it is much more likely to be attained by vividly and minutely painting a single decisive crisis, with the acts and feelings to which it gives rise, than by presenting comparatively hurried and imperfect sketches of previous events, when the current of life ran comparatively smoothly. Every one knows how much the character of the French church and nobility rose during the sufferings of the Revolution; with truth was the instrument of their execution called the "holy guillotine," from the virtues previously unheard of

which it brought to light. Could any dramatic sketch of their previous lives paint the inmost heart of their victims so well as one faithful portrait of their conduct in the supreme hour? Could the mingled greatness and meanness of Napoleon's character be so well portrayed, by a sketch of his life and impressive scenes from Lodi to St Helena, as by a graphic delineation of his conduct in the decisive crisis at Waterloo?

It sounds well, no doubt, to say, as Macaulay does, that the Romantic drama exhibits all the plans of a man's life, from the ardour of generous youth to the coolness of experienced age. This may be done in history or romance; but it is impossible within the limits of a single representation. It is quite enough if, in so short a space, the stage can represent one momentous crisis with adequate power, and really paint the heart as laid bare by its occurrence. He who knows how difficult it is to do that in a single instance, will feel that the effect can only be weakened by repeated draughts upon the sympathy of the audience, from the effect of different events in the same piece. The attempt to do so scarce ever fails to weaken the effect of the whole piece, by distracting the interest and confusing the idea of the spectators. If it succeeds, the result, like the repeated demands which Matthews made on our risible faculties, in general is to produce an effect directly the reverse of what was intended. The comedian, by trying too often to make us laugh, made us in the end more ready to cry; the tragedian, by trying too often to make us cry, succeeds sometimes only in making us laugh.

But what, then, it is said, is to be made of Shakspeare, and how is his transcendant and universally acknowledged greatness, while setting the unities at defiance, to be reconciled with those principles? We accept the challenge; we take the case of the Bard of Avon, with his deathless fame, and maintain that his dramatic excellence not only affords no impeachment of what has now been advanced, but furnishes its most decisive confirmation.

When it is commonly said that Shakspeare sets the unities at defiance, and assumed that his success has been owing to his disregarding them, the *fact* is not correctly stated, and the *inference* is not logically drawn. It is

a mistake to say that the unities are always disregarded by the great English tragedian. In many of his most popular pieces, they are maintained nearly as strictly as they were by Sophocles; and we are aware of not one of his dramas which is still represented with undiminished effect on the stage, in which the principle of the unities may not distinctly be recognised, and the long-continued success is not to be traced to their observation.

The Greeks, as every scholar knows, took great latitude with *time* in their representations. The interval between one act and another, often even the time occupied by the chanting of the chorus, frequently was made to cover a very considerable time, during which battles were fought, a duel or a conspiracy broke forth, an execution took place, and the most momentous events of the piece off the stage occurred. In place, it is true, they were strictly limited; the scene never changed, and all the incidents were introduced by bringing successive persons upon it. In this respect, it may be admitted, they carried their strictness too far. Probably it arose from the pieces being represented, for the most part, in the open air, under circumstances when the illusion produced by a change of scene, such as we witness at our theatres, was difficult, if not impossible, from the audience being, for the most part, above the actors, and the stage having no top. But to whatever cause it may have been owing, we hold the adherence to unity of place an unnecessary and prejudicial strictness in the Greek theatre. But a very slight deviation from it alone seems admissible; and the unity of action or emotion seems to be the very essence of this species of composition.

The true principle appears to be, that the place should not change to a greater extent than the spectators *can conceive the actors to have gone over without inconvenience within the time embraced in the representation.* This time often extended with the Greeks to a half, or even a whole day, and there seems nothing adverse to principle in such extension. Changes of scene, therefore, from one room in a palace to another; from one part of a town to another; or even from a town to a chateau, garden, forest, or other place in its near vicinity, appear to be perfectly admissible, without any violation of true dramatic principle. The

popular opera of the "Black Domino," to which the charming singing and acting of Madame Thillon has recently given such celebrity at the Haymarket, may be considered in this respect as a model of the unities taken in a reasonable sense. The time which elapses in the piece is a single night; the subject is the adventures which befell the heroine during that period; the scene changes, but only to the places in the same town to which she went during its continuance. There seems nothing inconsistent with the production of unity of interest in such a latitude. And with this inconsiderable expansion of the old Greek unities, it will be found that Shakspeare's greatest plays, and those which experience has found to be best adapted for the stage, have been constructed on the true principles.

Take for example *Romeo and Juliet*, and *As you Like it*—perhaps the tragedy and comedy of his composition which have most completely kept their hold of the stage. The unities are nearly as closely observed in both as in any drama of Sophocles. Excepting only a slight alteration of place and scene, everything is concentrated. The interest and emotion, which is the great point, is maintained one and indivisible. With the exception of Romeo's banishment to Mantua, and the scene with the druggist there, which, after all, is but an episode, and took the hero only two hours' drive from Verona, the place is confined to different scenes in that town. The festive hall where the lovers first meet—the exquisite meeting on the balcony—Father Ambrose's cell—the room where Juliet coaxes the nurse—the garden where she parts from Romeo when

> "Night's candles are burnt out, and jocund day
> Stands tiptoe on the misty mountain's top—"

the terrible scene where Juliet contemplates wakening in the tomb amidst her ancestors' bones!—the mausoleum itself, where the catastrophe occurs, are all in the same town. The time supposed to elapse does not exceed twenty-four hours; not more than in the *Electra* or *Iphigenia in Aulis* of Euripides. The interest, dependant entirely on the ardent love of Juliet, is as much undivided as in the *Antigone* of Sophocles. And yet we are told Shakspeare succeeded by disregarding the unities.

Again, in *As you Like it*, the same observation holds

true. Whoever recollects the scenes of that delightful drama—to which modern genius, in our first tragic actress, Miss Helen Faucit, has recently added such additional charms—must be sensible that it is, with the single exception of the scenes of the wrestlers in the first act, nothing but a Greek drama on the English stage. Menander or Aristophanes would have made one of the characters recount that scene, which is merely introductory, and introduced Rosalind and her companions for the first time in the Forest of Arden, where the real interest of the piece commences. A slight change of scene, indeed, occurs from one part of the forest to another, but it is so inconsiderable as in no degree to interfere with the unity of effect. The single interest awakened by Rosalind's secret love and playful archness of manner is kept up undivided throughout. So also in *The Tempest*, the unities in all the scenes which excite sympathy are as completely preserved as ever they were on the Greek stage; and the angelic innocence of Miranda stands forth in as striking and undivided relief as the devotion of Antigone to sisterly affection, or the self-immolation of Iphigenia to patriotic duty. We are well aware that there are characters of a very different kind in that drama; but the interest is concentrated on those in which the unity is preserved. Look at Othello. In what play of Euripides is singleness of interest more completely preserved than in that noble tragedy? The haughty bearing, conscious pride, but ardent love of the Moor; the deep love of Desdemona, nourished, as we so often see in real life, by qualities in her the very reverse; the gradual growth of jealousy from her innocent sportiveness of manner, and the diabolical machinations of Iago; her murder, in a fit of jealousy, by her despairing husband, and his self-sacrifice when the veil was drawn from his eyes, are all brought forward, if not with the literal strictness of the Greek drama, at least with as much regard to unity of time, place, and action, as is required by its principles. It is the same in Schiller. The interest of all his finest tragedies is almost as much centralised as it is in the Greek drama; and one of the most perfect of them, *The Bride of Messina*, is a Greek tragedy complete.

We are well aware that there are many other dramas,

and those, perhaps, not less popular, of Shakspeare, in which unity of time and place is entirely set at defiance, and in which the piece ends at the distance of hundreds of miles, sometimes after the lapse of years, from the point whence it commenced. *Macbeth*, *Julius Cæsar*, *Richard III.*, *Henry V.*, *Hamlet*, and many others, are examples of this deviation from former principle, and it is to the universal admiration which they excite that the national partiality for the Romantic drama is to be ascribed. But in all these instances it will be found—and the observation is a most material one—that the real interest is nearly as much centralised as it was in the Greek stage, and that it is on the extraordinary fascination which a few scenes, or *the incidents grouped round a single event*, possess, that the success of the piece depends. The historical tragedies read well, just as an historical romance does, and from the same cause, that they are looked on, not as dramas, but as brilliant passages of history. But this has proved unable to support them on the theatre. One by one they have gradually dropped away from the stage. Some are occasionally revived, from time to time, in order to display the power of a particular actor or actress, but never with any lasting success. Those plays of Shakspeare which alone retain their hold of the theatre, are either those, such as *Romeo and Juliet*, or *As you Like it*, in which the unities are substantially observed, or those in which the resplendent brilliancy of a few characters or scenes, within very narrow limits, fixes the attention of the audience so completely as to render comparatively harmless, because unfelt, the distraction produced by the intermixture of farce in the subordinate persons, or the violations of time and place in the structure of the piece. But it is not to every man that the pencil of the Bard of Avon,

"Dipp'd in the orient hues of heaven,"

is given ; and the subsequent failure of the Romantic drama, in this and every other country, is mainly to be ascribed to succeeding writers not having possessed his power of fixing, by the splendid colours of genius, the attention of the spectators on a particular part of the piece. Shakspeare disregards the unities in form ; but his burning imagination restores their operations in substance, for it fixes the mind's gaze on spots of transcendant light.

Take for example the most popular of the really Romantic dramas, *Macbeth* and *Hamlet*. No one need be told how the unities are violated in the first of these pieces: that it begins on a heath in Morayshire, where the witches appear to the victorious Thane; that the murder of the King takes place in the Castle of Inverness; that the usurper is slain by Macduff in front of Dunsinane Castle near the Tay. But none can either have read the play, or seen it acted, without feeling that the real interest lies in the events which occurred, and the ambitious feelings which were awakened in Macbeth and his wife, when temptation was put in their way within their own halls. Sophocles would have laid the scene there, and made one of the characters narrate in the outset the appearance of the witches on the heath, and brought Macduff to the gates of Macbeth's castle shortly after the murder of Duncan, to avenge his death. Shakspeare has not done this; but he has painted the scenes in the interior of the castle, before and after the murder, with such force and effect, that the mind is as much riveted by them as if no previous or subsequent deviation from the unities had been introduced. *Hamlet* begins in a strain of unparalleled interest: had the four last acts proceeded in the same sublime style as the first, and the filial duty devolved by the ghost on his son of avenging his murder been discharged as rapidly as it should have been, and as the feelings of the audience led them to desire, it would have been perhaps the most powerful tragedy in the world. Had Shakspeare proceeded on the principles of the Greek drama, he would have done this, and produced a drama as universally admired as the *Agamemnon* of Æschylus. But every one feels that the interest is weakened and wellnigh lost as the play proceeds: new characters are introduced, the burlesque succeeds the sublime, the original design is forgotten; and when the spectre appears a second time "to whet your almost blunted purpose," his appearance is felt to be as necessary to revive the decaying interest of the piece as to resuscitate the all but forgotten fervour of the Prince of Denmark.

We feel that we have committed high treason in the estimation of a large part of our readers, by contesting the justice of the principles on which Shakspeare proceeded in the construction of many of his dramas; and we know

that the opinions advanced are adverse to those of many, whose genius and professional success entitle their judgment on this subject to the very highest respect. But yet the weight of authority, if that is to be appealed to, is decidedly in favour of the principles of the Greek being the true ones of the drama. From the days of Aristotle to those of Addison, the greatest critics have concurred in this opinion; and he is a bold innovator on this subject who sets at naught the precepts of Horace* and Quintilian, forgets the example of Sophocles and Schiller, of Euripides and Alfieri, of Corneille and Metastasio, of Racine and Molière, and disregards the decided judgment of Pope and Byron.

> "Those rules of old discover'd not devised,
> As Nature still but Nature methodised;
> Nature like Liberty is best restrain'd
> By the same laws which first herself ordain'd.
> Hear how learn'd Greece her useful rules indites,
> When to repress, and when indulge our flights.
> Just precepts thus from great examples given,
> She drew from them what they derived from heaven."
>
> *Essay on Criticism.*

The opinion of Lord Byron was peculiarly strong in favour of the unities, and was repeatedly expressed in his correspondence preserved in Moore's Life: although his own noble dramas, being avowedly constructed with no view to representation, but as a vehicle for powerful declamation or impassioned poetry, often exhibit, especially in *Manfred*, the most glaring violations of them. Johnson confessed that the weight of authority in favour of the Greek rules was so great, that it required no small courage to attempt even to withstand it. But it is not by authority that this, or any other question of taste, is to be decided. The true test of the correctness of opinion on such matters is to be found in experience, and the inward feelings of persons of cultivated minds and enlarged observations. And in the preceding observations we have only extended to the drama principles familiar to artists in every other department of human imagination, and generally admitted in them, at least, to be correct; and appealed, we trust not in vain, to the experience gained, and the lessons learned, by those who have cultivated the sister arts in these times with the greatest success.

* "Vos exemplaria Græca
Nocturnâ versate manu, versate diurnâ."
Ars Poetica.

WELLINGTON

[CHURCH OF ENGLAND REVIEW, APRIL 1845]

"GENIUS," says Dr Johnson, "is nothing but strong natural parts accidentally turned into one direction." Few can have surveyed with an attentive eye the varieties of human character, at least of the highest class, whether in the historic mirror or real life, without being convinced that the observation of the great moralist is well founded. It is a very common thing, indeed, to see a strong propensity evinced, even in the earliest years, by particular persons, and it is the frequency of this peculiarity which has caused genius to be so frequently associated, in general opinion and common language, with an original and unalterable bent. It undoubtedly is so in many instances. Mozart, three years old, displayed not only a taste but a genius for music; Correggio declared in boyhood, "I, too, am a painter;" Canova, at nine years of age, made a little lion out of a pound of butter; Byron, at ten, felt an ardour of passion for an infant beauty of the same years, which was scarcely surpassed by the subsequent attachments of his impassioned mind. But in these early and precocious displays of inherent disposition, it is rarely, if ever, that the premonitory symptoms of the highest kind of intellectual power, or the noblest flights of original conception, are to be found. They appear thus early in persons in whom the imaginative are far stronger than the reasoning powers—the former often spring up with the utmost vigour at once; the latter require time for their growth—they rarely, if ever, appear before the age of puberty. Imagination combined with intellect, genius with reason, the greatest triumph of the

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Maxims and Opinions of the Duke of Wellington, collected from his Despatches and Speeches. London: 1845.

human mind, of tardy development, and generally little conspicuous in youth, goes on gathering strength and increasing in intensity to the close of life. This is easily explained, if we consider that a quick and fervent mind readily fans a flame from a few perishable materials; but a great one requires mighty and durable elements to warm into a glow: "Materiâ alitur, motibus excitatur, et urendo lucescit."

If instances are numerous in which persons destined for future celebrity have given tokens of their inherent bent in their early years, examples are not less frequent of persons of the greatest future fame being remarkable for nothing at all in the first stages of life, or, if distinguished, known only by qualities the very reverse of those on which their future celebrity was founded. Julius Cæsar, to the age of thirty-seven, was distinguished only by the licentiousness and profligacy of his life; he was a living example of the oft-repeated saying, "that no man who had both in his power, ever did anything among men till he had ceased to have any influence with women." Burke evinced no particular ability at school or college; and, what is very remarkable, the reasoning powers are chiefly conspicuous in his earlier compositions, the fervour of imagination, united to the vigour of intellect, in those of his maturity or old age. The common story of Shakspeare having been a deer-stealer in his youth, be it true or false, may be regarded as at least a certain proof that he did not, in early life, evince any of those extraordinary powers of conception and imagination which have rendered his name immortal. His profound knowledge of the human heart demonstrates the reverse; *that* is never gained but by experience and suffering. Bacon's latest writings exhibit far greater original genius, vigour of expression, and energy of thought, than his earlier compositions. It was when blinded by study, and worn out by care, old and unfortunate, that Milton wrote his *Paradise Lost*. Sophocles composed his Tragedies in such advanced years, that, when engaged in writing one of the most perfect of them, his sons brought him before the courts of law to have him deprived, as incapable, of the management of his affairs. Dante's *Inferno* was the fruit of twenty years' exile, in which "life," as he himself said, "had been watered only by his

tears." Nothing that can be relied on is known of the youth of Homer; but common and unvarying tradition, which represents him in extreme old age, blind, and in misery, charming the inhabitants of the Isles of Greece by his strains, is an indication that it was in mature years that his deathless poems were composed. A long life of observation, thought, and reflection, combined with the utmost ardour of imagination, were required to form the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.

Wellington belongs to the latter, and by far the highest class of illustrious characters. He was not a great man because he was a great general, but a great general because he was a great man. He would have been equally great in anything else which he undertook. It is reported that he has said, "that the native bent of his mind was towards finance and civil government rather than military affairs." It is certain that when he took his seat at the board of the cabinet council, it was the vigour of thought and perfect command of every subject which came before them, even more than his military fame, which won such general respect, and ultimately raised him, in difficult times, to the highest place in the government. From his earliest youth, his despatches and observations evince a soundness of judgment, a maturity of thought, and an elevation of principle, which we generally look for in vain in persons of the most advanced years and extensive experience; and which were the more remarkable if, as is commonly said, his amusements at that period were of a much lighter description, and partook more of the gaiety of Cæsar's youth than the austerity of Cato's age. But these distractions never affected the solid foundations, the deep substratum of his mind; and we perceive in his despatches, from first to last, unequivocal and frequent proofs of the same constant sense of duty, the same unfailing strength of judgment, the same singleness and patriotism of heart. The vigour and energy of his understanding, however, seems to have increased, rather than diminished, as he grew older; and at no period so much as in his later years, are such profound and far-seeing observations to be met with, which, in advance of the age in which they were spoken, only come to be fully understood and appreciated in the next.

The Duke of Wellington, however, is essentially a man of action. He was born to be the ruler, rather than the instructor of men; he has no poetical imagination, and little turn for abstract speculations or visionary thought. Hence his sway over the great majority of society, in future times, will never equal that of Napoleon, in whom the ardour of poetic fancy was singularly blended with the exactness of mathematical reasoning, and speculation on general subjects possessed as great charms as the pursuits of ambition or the excitement of war. Wellington's maxims and opinions, as will immediately appear, are invaluable: but they have all a bearing on practical affairs, and the immediate direction and government of men. A few great principles of rectitude and morality, applicable alike to nations as to individuals, were firmly fixed in his mind; and it was in applying them with undeviating steadiness and unerring sagacity, that his wisdom, as measured by the event, consists. But he always took a practical view of affairs: he considered them, on every occasion, as the subjects of action, not speculation. He did not think that, because he had taken up one position with one enemy in one campaign, therefore he was bound to take up the same position with another enemy in every future campaign. His great merit consisted in seeing more clearly than other men, at all times, the coming course of events, and shaping his conduct so as to render it as little injurious, or as beneficial as possible, to the cause with which he was intrusted. In one particular only he was always the same, and that was in love to his country: his conduct, variable in other respects, was ever true to the pole-star of duty.

Of Wellington's far-seeing sagacity, which almost amounted to prescience, no more remarkable example can be presented than the constant and unchanging firmness with which he affirmed, after the catastrophe of the Corunna retreat, that the cause of the Peninsula was not only noways hopeless, but that Portugal might be successfully defended by Great Britain against any force which France could bring against it. Few among the elder part of the present generation, by whom that dismal termination to all the highly-excited hopes of the nation is recollected, can ever forget the general feeling of despair which seized upon the public mind when the gallant army, once thirty thousand strong, which

had sailed from England a few months before, returned, a third of its numbers fallen, depressed in spirits, having lost, like Francis I., all but its honour in that calamitous retreat; when the hosts of Spain had been dispersed, like chaff before the wind, by the legions of Napoleon; when Madrid had fallen, and a few thousand men alone remained to prevent the French eagles being forthwith planted on the towers of Lisbon. The English generals engaged in the combat regarded the cause of Spain as utterly hopeless, and the idea of defending Portugal as too extravagant to be for a moment entertained. Sir John Moore and Sir David Baird had written to Government under this impression, recommending that *empty* transports should be sent to Vigo Bay, to bring away the troops, instead of the thirteen thousand men which had been prepared to reinforce the army. "If the French succeed in Spain," said Sir J. Moore, in November 1808, "it will be *in vain to attempt to resist them in Portugal.* The Portuguese are without a military force, and, from the experience of their conduct under Sir Arthur Wellesley, *no dependence is to be placed on any aid they can give.* The British must, in that event, *immediately take steps to evacuate the country.*"* There were few men in Britain, at that time, with the disasters of the campaign before their eyes, who probably entertained a different opinion. But what said Wellington a few months after, when no intervening success had occurred to shake the grounds of Sir J. Moore and Sir D. Baird's opinion? "Portugal *may be successfully defended* against any force the French could bring against it; and the maintenance of that position would be *the greatest support to the common cause in Spain.*"† It was that opinion which was the foundation of the defence of Portugal, and ultimately the cause of the deliverance of Europe.

Like all other men engaged in public life, Wellington had many vexations and mortifications to undergo, owing to the partiality or injustice on the part of Government in promoting men of inferior capacity, and unknown to fame, over his head. But nothing was ever able to shake his devotion to

* Sir J. Moore to Lord Castlereagh, Nov. 24, 1808. *Parl. Deb.*

† Memorandum on the Defence of Portugal, March 9, 1809. GURWOOD, iv. 261, and vi. 5.

his country, or make him for a moment entertain the idea which lesser men would at once have embraced, of throwing up his command on receiving such unworthy treatment. When he was first sent to Spain, he received the command of the expedition at Cork, and he set sail at its head without having received the slightest hint of an intention to supersede him in the command of it. The first intimation he received that he was to be degraded to a subordinate situation was on the 15th July 1808, when off Mondego Bay, being then informed he was to be superseded by Sir H. Burrard and Sir H. Dalrymple. He immediately wrote to Lord Castlereagh, the minister for foreign affairs, "Pole and Burghersh have apprised me of the arrangements for the future command of the army. All that I can say on this subject is, that, whether I am to command the army or to quit it, I shall do my best to insure its success; and you may depend upon it that I shall not hurry the operations, or commence them one moment sooner than they ought to be commenced, in order that I may acquire the credit of the success. The Government will determine for me in what way they will employ me hereafter, either here or elsewhere."* When asked by an intimate friend, after his return, how he, who had commanded an army of forty thousand men, and been made a knight of the Bath, and received the thanks of Parliament, could submit to be reduced to the rank of a general of a division of infantry, he replied, "For this reason—I was 'nimukwallah,' as we say in the East; I have ate the King's salt, and, therefore, I consider it my duty to serve with zeal and promptitude, when or wherever the King or his Government may think fit to employ me." Here was true magnanimity, for it was forgetfulness of self in the cause of duty. Nor did it go without its reward, even in this world. Inferior men, actuated by the jealousy which is the invariable mark of little minds, would probably have resigned the command, and retired from public life on so scandalous a slight; but Wellington remained constant to his duty, the battle of Vimeira succeeded, his greatness outgrew competition, silenced envy, and he lived to strike down Napoleon on the field of Waterloo.

* Gurwood, iv. 43.

If this was a memorable instance of the singleness of heart and devotion to country of the British hero, not less was the invincible firmness with which he adhered to the discharge of his duty, under circumstances of difficulty which would have shaken the resolution of any other man, characteristic of the firmness and strength of his character. Like Marlborough, and, indeed, all other great men, he found that the difficulties with which he had to contend in combating his enemies in front were inconsiderable, compared with those which assailed him from the ignorance, selfishness, timidity, and incapacity of those on whom he was obliged to rely to resist their efforts. His winter campaign with the Allies, to hold the confederacy together, generally exceeded in duration, length, and fatigue, his summer campaign with the marshals of Napoleon. The jealousies and incapacity of the Spaniards, the selfishness and timidity of the Portuguese regency, were more formidable antagonists than either Soult or Marmont. Nor were his difficulties confined to the Allied Powers. Energy and zeal were never wanting, indeed, in the British Government; but they were too often entirely and deplorably ignorant of military combination, or the measures necessary to insure military success.

But what said Wellington at the time when the country was ringing from side to side with the repeated discomfiture of the Spanish armies; when the Opposition were incessantly proclaiming in and out of Parliament the utter insanity of continuing any longer the hopeless contest in the Peninsula, and Ministers even laid upon him the whole responsibility of bringing away the army in safety from Lisbon?*

"I conceive that the honour and interests of the country require that we should hold our ground here as long as possible; and, please God, I will maintain it as long as I can; and *I will neither endeavour to shift from my own shoulders the responsibility for the failure*, by calling for means which I know they cannot give, and which, perhaps, would not add materially to the facility of attaining our object; nor will I give to Ministers, who are

* "The state of opinion in England is very unfavourable to the Peninsula. The Ministers are as much alarmed as the public, or as the Opposition *pretend to be;* and they appear to be of opinion that I am inclined to fight a desperate battle which is to answer no purpose. Their instructions are clear enough, and I am willing to act under them, although they *throw upon me the whole responsibility* of bringing away the army in safety, after staying in the Peninsula till it shall be necessary to evacuate it."—WELLINGTON, 21st April 1810. GURWOOD, vi. 48, 49.

not strong, and who feel the delicacy of their situation, an excuse for withdrawing the army from a position which, in my opinion, the honour and interest of the country require that we should maintain as long as possible. I think that if the Portuguese do their duty, we shall have enough to maintain it: if they do not, nothing that Great Britain can afford can save the country; and if from that cause I fail in saving it, and am obliged to go, I shall be able to carry away the British army."*

Here is Wellington painted to the very life, and unconsciously, in the simplicity of his heart, painted by himself: desiring nothing from his Government which he knew they might have a difficulty in giving him, seeking to relieve himself from no responsibility, singly sustaining a shaking country and sinking Administration, alone holding together a jealous and discordant alliance, and seeking no reward for all his efforts but that which attends the simple discharge of duty.

The time has now arrived when in a calm and dispassionate retrospect of Wellington's life, we may add to the many instances with which it abounds of the heroic discharge of duty, the manly stand he made against the Reform Bill. It is needless to remind the existing generation what a storm of obloquy his resistance to the popular wishes on this occasion produced; how entirely, for the time, it caused all the great services of the Duke to be forgotten; how shamefully he was, in consequence, treated by the nation which he had made illustrious, and the people he had saved. It is sufficient to refer to the windows of Apsley House, long barricaded as against the forces of a beleaguering enemy: to the hero himself, torn by a furious mob from his horse, and with difficulty rescued from death, in the streets of London, on the anniversary of the battle of Waterloo, on 18th June 1832. Yet let us examine what the Duke *really did say*, which occasioned all this storm of indignation, and brought to light this hideous display of ingratitude, and see whether there is anything in it at which wisdom would now hesitate, or which faction itself would not admit to be true :—

"I am thoroughly convinced that England possesses at this moment a legislature which answers all the good purposes of a legislature in a higher degree than ever has been found to answer in any country in the world; that it possesses the confidence of the country; that it deservedly possesses that confidence, and that its decisions have justly the greatest weight and

* Wellington to Hon. J. Villiers, 14th January 1810.

influence with the people. Nay, my Lords, I will go yet further, and say, that if at this moment I had to form a legislature for any country, particularly for one like this, in possession of *great property of various descriptions*, although, perhaps, I should not form one precisely such as we have, I would endeavour to produce *something which would give the same results*, namely, a representation of the people containing a large body of the property of the country, and in which the great landed proprietors have a preponderating influence."—Speech in Parliament, 2d November 1830. *Maxims and Opinions*, pp. 219, 220.

This is the literal text of what the Duke of Wellington said on this memorable occasion ; and is there anything in it to which every man of sense, of whatever party or description, will not at once subscribe ? Is there any one, now that the perilous experiment has been made, who will dispute that a legislature, to suit the great and varied interests of the empire, must contain "a large body of its property, and that the landed proprietors must have a preponderating influence in it ?" Where are now the boundless anticipations of social improvement, and deliverance from evil, with which the long-continued and vehement discussions on Reform were ushered in ? Is there any class in the community that has gained the slightest benefit from the much contested change ? Are the interests of the great and important producing classes, agricultural and manufacturing, better secured or more prosperous than they were under the old constitution ? Are the people more contented, has insurrection been less frequent since the ten-pound franchise was introduced ? Has Ireland been tranquillised by its healing influence ; or has the fierce demand for the Repeal of the Union been allayed by its effect ? Are the manufacturing classes better satisfied with their lot; and have the heartburnings and jealousy between rich and poor ceased, since so large a portion of the middle classes have been admitted to the representation ? Have the colonies been more prosperous than they were before ? Has Canada always been loyal and quiet ; and is the West Indies, as in days of yore, in Nelson's words, "the right arm of our naval strength" ? Have the productions of the soil, and the consequent export of our manufactures to those once splendid possessions, been increasing since popular passion was permitted to carry the legislature by storm, and force on the perilous change of total emancipation ? Has the East been prosperous; have our arms experienced no reverse in Central

Asia since the days of democratic ascendency began at home? Are our finances prosperous? Is the sinking fund preserved inviolate, and daily extinguishing more and more of the national debt, as it did in the days of Pitt and Fox? Have we succeeded in averting the dreadful evil, the main cause of the destruction of Rome, of a heavy direct taxation in time of peace? And is the national expenditure amply provided for, as it was in days of yore, in ordinary times, by the unobserved and unfelt operation of indirect taxation? These are the questions which history will have to answer in judging of the Duke of Wellington's declaration against Reform: and when they are answered, is there any impartial man who will hesitate in awarding to that memorable declaration the praise of prescience and far-seeing sagacity, beyond, perhaps, any other in the whole career of the Duke of Wellington?

That Wellington was a great and successful general, all the world has long known, and France has had to rue his victorious sword more than that of any other general who has ever wielded one in hostility against her. But till the publication of his despatches, it was not known how great a fund of wisdom there was in his writings; how many profound and sagacious thoughts had passed through his mind; by what noble and elevated principles his whole life had been regulated. But these thoughts and observations lay buried in the prodigious mass of ten thickly-printed volumes of despatches, in which there was necessarily so much repetition, and so much unimportant or uninteresting matter, that few had nerves to read them through, and their high price placed them beyond the reach of the great body of purchasers. Great part, also, of the Duke's most valuable opinions and views on political subjects were contained in his parliamentary speeches, and could be rescued from oblivion only by ransacking the interminable volumes of Hansard. A publication, therefore, was greatly wanted which should cull these invaluable legacies of wisdom and virtue from the dross in which they were enveloped, and present them in an abbreviated form, and at a price accessible to the great bulk of the community. Such a publication exists in the work before us, which has been executed by Mr Francis with equal diligence and discrimination. A more

valuable contribution has never been made to the cause of political truth, and the best interests of the British Empire.

In the grand banquet given to the Duke of Wellington at Dover, in August 1839, Lord Brougham, who was intrusted with his health, thus expressed himself:—

"I am asked to propose the health of the illustrious Duke, as if to show that no difference of opinion upon subjects however important, no long course of opposition however contracted upon public principles, not even long inveterate habits of public opposition, are able to stifle the natural feelings of our hearts so far as to obscure our reason, or to prevent us from feeling, as we ought, boundless gratitude for boundless merits. Neither can it pluck from our minds that admiration proportioned to the transcendent genius, in peace and in war, of him who is amongst us this day; neither can it lighten or alleviate the painful, the deep sense, which the untired mind never can get rid of, when it is overwhelmed by a debt of gratitude too boundless to be repaid. Party may do much, but it cannot operate so as to make us forget those services; it cannot so far bewilder the memory and fever the judgment, and eradicate from our minds those feelings which do us the most honour, and are the most unavoidable. But what else have I to do? If I had all the eloquence of all the tongues ever attuned to speak, what else could I do? How could a thousand words of all the names that could be named, speak so powerfully, and even if I spoke with the tongue of an angel—as if I mention one word—Sir Arthur Wellesley, Duke of Wellington, the hero of a hundred fields, in all of which his banner was raised in triumph! Who never—bear witness, Europe! bear witness, Asia!—advanced but to cover his arms with glory; the captain who never advanced but to be victorious; the mightier captain who never retreated, but to eclipse the glory of his advances, by the yet harder task of unwearied patience, indomitable to lassitude—by the inexhaustible resources of transcendent skill, showing the wonders, the marvels of a moral courage never yet subdued. Despising all who thwarted him with ill-considered advice; neglecting all hostility, so he knew it to be groundless; laughing to scorn reviling enemies, jealous competitors, lukewarm friends, ay, hardest of all, to neglect despising even a fickle public, he cast his eyes forward as a man might—else he deserved not to command men—cast forward his eye to observe when that momentary fickleness of the people would pass away, knowing that, in the end, the people are ever just to merit."

It is difficult to imagine praise higher, and at the same time more discriminate and deserved, than this glowing eulogium. Yet is it not the mere effusion of a warm imagination, heated by the enthusiasm of the moment, and exalted by the presence of the object of admiration, that has expressed itself in similar terms. History has recorded an opinion of the Duke of Wellington not less flattering. It is thus that, far removed from the enthusiasm of banquets, the annalist of the time has written:—

"With an army seldom superior in numbers to a single corps of the French marshals; with troops dispirited by recent disasters, and wholly unaided by practical experience; without any compulsory law to recruit his ranks, or

any strong passion for war to supply its want, he was called on to combat successively vast armies perpetually filled by the terrible powers of the conscription, composed in great part of veteran soldiers, headed by chiefs who, risen from the ranks, and practically acquainted with the art of war in all its grades, had fought their way from the grenadier's musket to the marshal's baton, and were followed by men who, trained in the same school, were animated by the same ambition. Still more, he was the general of a nation in which the chivalrous and mercantile qualities are strangely blended together; which, justly proud of its historic glory, is unreasonably jealous of its present expenditure; which, covetous in war of military renown, is impatient in peace of previous preparation; which starves its establishment when danger is over, and frets at defeat when its terrors are in sight; which dreams in strife of Cressy and Azincourt, and ruminates at rest on economic reduction. He combated at the head of an alliance formed of heterogeneous states, composed of discordant materials; in which ancient animosities were hardly forgotten in present danger, or religious divisions by national fervour; in which corruption often paralysed the arms of patriotism, and jealousy withheld the resources of power.

"Nothing but the most consummate prudence, as well as ability in conduct, could with such means have achieved victory over such an enemy; but the character of Wellington was singularly fitted for the task. Capable, when occasion required or opportunity was afforded, of the most daring enterprises, he was yet cautious and wary in his general conduct; prodigal of his own labour, regardless of his own person, he was avaricious only of the blood of his soldiers. Endowed by nature with an indomitable soul, a constitution of iron, he possessed that tenacity of purpose, and indefatigable activity, which is ever necessary to great achievements. Prudent in council, sagacious in design, he was yet prompt and decided in action. No general ever revolved the probable dangers of an enterprise more anxiously before undertaking it; none possessed in a higher degree the eagle eye, the arm of steel, necessary to carry it into execution. By the steady application of this rare combination of qualities, he was enabled to raise the British military fame from an unworthy state of depression to an unparalleled pitch of glory; to educate in presence of the enemy, not only his soldiers in the field, but his rulers in the cabinet; to silence, by avoiding disaster, the clamour of his enemies; to strengthen, by progressive success, the ascendency of his friends; to augment, by the exhibition of its results, the energy of the governments; to rouse, by deeds of glory, the enthusiasm of the people. Skilfully seizing the opportunity of victory, he studiously avoided the chances of defeat; aware that a single disaster would at once endanger his prospects, discourage his countrymen, and strengthen his opponents, he was content to forego many opportunities of earning fame, and stifle many desires to grasp at glory. Magnanimously checking the aspirations of genius, he trusted for ultimate success rather to perseverance in a wise, than audacity in a daring course. He thus succeeded during six successive campaigns, with a comparatively inconsiderable army, in maintaining his ground against the vast and veteran forces of Napoleon; in defeating successively all his marshals, and baffling successively all his enterprises; and finally, rousing such an enthusiastic spirit in the British Empire, as enabled its Government to put forth its immense resources on a scale worthy of its present greatness and ancient renown, and terminate a contest of twenty years by planting the British standard on the walls of Paris." *

It may readily be discerned from this character, how large a share political wisdom and far-seeing sagacity, as well as indomitable tenacity of purpose, have had in the Duke's

* *History of Europe*, vi. 121, 123.

military success. In truth, it is there that the secret of his triumphs is to be found; it is there that the mainspring of his life was placed. His conduct as a general, great and celebrated as it has been, was but a part of those more comprehensive principles which ruled his universal conduct, which prompted him at every period of his life to set himself to oppose the prevailing dangers to which his country was exposed, and so frequently rendered him triumphant over them. The heroic devotion, the forgetfulness of self, the love of country, the sense of duty, which we admire in the hero in the lines of Torres Vedras, when combating the corrupt Portuguese regency, subduing the pertinacious jealousy of Spain, or sustaining the sinking resolution of England, have all their counterparts in subsequent times, when, in his long pacific career, he contended with social enemies not less active, allayed jealousies not less irreconcileable, averted dangers not less formidable. Even those who differed with him in many particulars of his domestic administration, must admire the uniform integrity of his conduct, the unchanging singleness of his heart, the indomitable firmness of his resolution.

Europe has had abundant reason to know the force and formidable character of the French army since the Revolution; but observe how Wellington, when it was at the highest point of its elevation, seized its character and predicted its downfall:—

"It may be asked why we should be obliged to spend our money, and why our troops should not go on, as the French do, without pay, provisions, magazines, or anything? The French army is certainly a wonderful machine; but if we are to form such a one, we must form such a government as exists in France, which can with impunity lose one-half the troops it employs in every campaign, solely by the hardships and privations it imposes upon them. Next, we must compose our army of soldiers drawn from all classes of the population of the country; from the good and middling, as well in rank as education, as from the bad; and not, as all other nations do, and we in particular, from the bad only. Thirdly, we must establish such a system of discipline as the French have—a system founded on the strength of the tyranny of the government, which operates upon an army composed of soldiers, the greater part of whom are sober, well-disposed, amenable to order, and in some degree educated. When we shall have done all this, and withal made our armies of the strength of those maintained by the French, we may require them to live as the French do, viz. by the authorised and regular plunder of the country and its inhabitants, if any should remain; and we may expose them to the labour, hardships, and privations which the French soldier suffers every day; and we

must expect the same proportion of loss every campaign, viz. one-half of those who take the field."*

No one has in subsequent times more clearly set forth the peculiar dangers, and causes of the almost incredible success, of the French arms since the Revolution than Wellington did, at the height of their power, in this passage. Yet even then, when Austria had recently before sunk under the shock of Wagram, and all Europe, from the walls of Cadiz to the gulf of Finland, obeyed the mandates of Napoleon, he not only did not despair of setting limits to his power, but clearly foresaw the circumstances which would induce its ruin, in those which caused its present elevation :—

"I have, however, long considered it probable, that even *we* should witness a general resistance throughout Europe to the fraudulent and disgusting tyranny of Buonaparte, created by the example of what has occurred in Spain and Portugal, and that *we* should be actors and advisers in these scenes; and I have reflected frequently upon the measures which should be pursued to give a chance of success.

"Those who embark in projects of this description should be made to understand, or to act as if they understood, that having once drawn the sword they must not return it, till they have completely accomplished their object; they must be prepared, and must be forced to make all sacrifices to the cause. Submission to military discipline and order is a matter of course; but when a nation determines to resist the authority and shake off the government of Buonaparte, they must be prepared and forced to sacrifice the luxuries and comforts of life, and to risk all in a contest which, it should be clearly understood before it is undertaken, has for its object to save all or nothing.

"The first measure for a country to adopt is to form an army, and to raise a revenue from the people to defray the expense of an army; above all, to form a government of such strength as that army and people can be forced by it to perform their duty: this is the rock upon which Spain has split, and all our measures in any other country which should afford hopes of resistance to Buonaparte, should be directed to avoid it. The enthusiasm of the people is very fine, and looks well in print; but I have never known it produce anything but confusion. In France, what was called enthusiasm was power and tyranny, acting through the medium of popular societies, which have ended by overturning Europe, and in establishing the most powerful and dreadful tyranny that ever existed. In Spain, the enthusiasm of the people spent itself in *vivas* and vain boasting; the notion of its existence prevented an attempt even to discipline the troops; and its existence has been alleged ever since as the excuse for the rank ignorance of the officers, and the indiscipline and constant misbehaviour of the troops.

"I therefore earnestly recommend you, wherever you go, to trust nothing to the enthusiasm of the people: give them a strong and firm, and, if possible, a good government; but, above all, a strong one, which shall enforce upon them to do their duty by themselves and their country; and let measures of finance to support an army go hand in hand with measures to raise it. I am quite certain that the finances of Great Britain are more than a match for Buonaparte; and that we shall have the means of aiding any country that may be disposed to resist his tyranny. But those means are necessarily limited in every country by the difficulty of procuring specie:

* Despatch, Jan. 26. 1811. *Maxims and Opinions*, 111.

this necessary article can be obtained in sufficient quantities only by the contributions of the people; although Great Britain can and ought to assist with money, as well as in other modes, every effort of this description, the principal financial as well as military effort ought to be by the people of the resisting country."*

Here is the true view both of the power of revolutionary France, of the failure of the efforts hitherto made in the Peninsula to resist it, and of the only means by which the deliverance of Europe could ultimately be effected. Wellington saw clearly that it was not the enthusiasm of the French Revolution, of which so much has been said, which had produced its triumphs, but the stern reality of power erected by its influence, which drew forth with unrelenting hand the resources of the country: he saw that it was the want of such a powerful and despotic central authority which caused the Spanish Revolution, nursed amidst equal enthusiasm, fanned by equal fervour, to prove so miserable a failure in resisting the aggression of France. And he pointed out the only true and practicable mode of combating the invasions of Napoleon, which was by forming a powerful central government, to turn to good purpose the burst of enthusiasm which never failed to appear in the people of any country which had been visited by the curse of French oppression, and compel their exertions when the ardour of the moment might be beginning to fail, or the public fervour might be in danger of being lost in impracticable or visionary enterprises. How different was this sound and practical view of the matter from the heated dreams of Mr Frere, which, at the outset of the Spanish war, so far deluded both the Government and people of Great Britain, as to the probable issue of the contest by the mere force of popular enthusiasm; or the desponding views of Sir John Moore, backed by the whole Opposition party of England, as to the utter impracticability of opposing any effectual resistance on the Continent of Europe to the power of France. Here was confidence without presumption, hope without delusion; steadiness, because a foundation in reason. How completely was the justice of the whole demonstrated by his own successful defence of Portugal, and the subsequent glorious efforts of Russia and Germany.

* Despatch, Dec. 10, 1811. *Maxims and Opinions*, 121.

On the nature of the power of revolutionary France, and the means by which it had risen to so portentous a height, the Duke early in the contest recorded the following opinions :—

"In the early days of the revolutionary war, the French, at the recommendation, I believe, of Brissot, adopted a measure which they called a *levée en masse*, and put every man, animal, and article in their own country in requisition for the service of the armies. This system of plunder was carried into execution by the popular societies throughout the country. It is not astonishing that a nation, among whom such a system was established, should have been anxious to carry on the war beyond their own frontier: this system both created the desire and afforded the means of success, and with the war they carried wherever they went the system of requisitions; not, however, before they had, by these and other revolutionary measures, entirely destroyed all the sources of national prosperity at home.

"Wherever the French armies have since gone, their subsistence, at least the more expensive article in all armies, and means of transport, have been taken from the country *for nothing:* sometimes, besides subsistence, they have received clothing and shoes; in other instances, besides those articles, they have received pay; and from Austria, Prussia, and other parts of Germany and Italy, besides all those articles of supply for their troops, heavy contributions in money for the supply of the treasury of Paris: to this enumeration ought to be added the plunder acquired by the generals, officers, and troops, and it will be seen that the new French system of war is the greatest evil that ever fell on the civilised world.

"The capital and industry of France having been destroyed during the Revolution, it is obvious that the government cannot raise a revenue from its inhabitants, adequate to the support of the large force which must be maintained, in order to uphold the authority of the new government, particularly in the newly-conquered and ceded states, and, at the same time, defend the widely-extended frontiers of France from all those whose interest and inclination must lead them to attack it. *The French government, therefore, under whatever form administered, must seek for support for their armies in foreign countries: war must be a financial resource;* and that appears to me to be the greatest misfortune which the French Revolution has entailed upon the present generation." *

This is the true view of the revolutionary power of France, and affords the real and unanswerable vindication of the steady resistance opposed to it by Great Britain. The Opposition in England, and the Liberal party over Europe, during the war, who were secretly inclined to favour the advances of France, because it was founded on popular power, incessantly exclaimed that the war was undertaken and persisted in solely at the instigation, and for the purposes, of the Allied Powers; that it was a crusade of kings against the liberties of mankind. Wellington, on the other hand, saw at the time, what history has since completely

* Wellington to Lord Bathurst, Jan. 12, 1812. *Maxims and Opinions*, 121, 122.

demonstrated to have been the fact, that war and foreign conquest were to revolutionary France a matter not merely of inclination or passion, but *of necessity:* they were driven across the Rhine, and into a system of aggression, not merely by the ardent and enthusiastic passions of the people, which, highly wrought up by political excitement, could find vent, after the government at home was overthrown, only in foreign conquest, but also, and still more effectually, by the necessities of their situation. Internal industry having been paralysed, domestic capital destroyed, foreign commerce annihilated by the confiscations of the Revolution, no resource remained to the starving multitudes whom it had warmed into life, but foreign aggression. But if war was undertaken against other states, how was it to be maintained on the scale requisite to insure success, without an affluent exchequer? And how was that to be obtained out of an impoverished and ruined country, and from a people who looked for a substantial proof of the reality of their emancipation, in a general liberation from taxes and imposts of every kind?

Foreign conquest was thus as indispensable to revolutionary France as it was to ancient Rome; and from the same cause. Its triumphant people were daily looking for a decree similar to that of the Romans, who, after the conquest of Macedonia, proclaimed an eternal liberation from taxes of all kinds to the victorious citizens of the Republic. The "multis utile bellum" was felt as strongly by the government, in the seasonable relief to the exchequer, as by the people in the career of excitement, promotion, and plunder, which it opened to their arms. They spread across the Rhine, as the Americans have done into Texas and Maine, and are doing into Oregon. Every man in the state hoped to gain something by the plunder of the world, and that was an invincible attraction to those who had nothing. Peace was impracticable with such a power: it reserved the most friendly allies only for the melancholy privilege, like Ulysses in the cave of Polyphemus, of being last devoured. And here is to be found the explanation of the remarkable facts so decisively demonstrated by the whole history of the Revolution, that from the time that its arms were first permanently carried by Napoleon into

foreign countries, more than half the supplies for the treasury of Paris were obtained from the contributions levied in foreign countries, and that the most formidable advances of French power were made not during war, but in peace ; and not so much at the expense of powerful and hostile, as of weak and allied states.

It was the peculiar and characteristic glory of Wellington, on the other hand, that he from beginning to end, and in the midst of privations and difficulties which would have broken down the resolution of any other man, resolutely adhered to the system of maintaining the contest from his own resources, and absolutely repudiated the infamous system of making war maintain war. With how much difficulty this was done, at how great a cost to the national resources, by what incredible financial exertions both on the part of the English general and the Government at home, is proved by innumerable passages of his despatches. So excessive did the strain in consequence become on the British exchequer, that the resolution of the cabinet fairly gave way before it during the disastrous winter of 1811-12, when the North American market was closed to our exports ; and they hinted to Wellington in the spring of the last year, that it would be highly desirable if he could adopt, at least to a certain extent, the system of the enemy, and provide for the cost of the war by contributions levied on its theatre. But Wellington replied, after deprecating any such oppressive system of hostility :—

"I shall be sorry if Government should think themselves under the necessity of withdrawing from this country on account of the expense of this contest. From what I have seen of the objects of the French Government, and the sacrifices they make to accomplish them, I have no doubt that if the British army were for any reason to withdraw from the Peninsula, and the French Government were relieved from the pressure of military operations on the Continent, they would incur all risks to land an army in his Majesty's dominions. Then, indeed, would commence *an expensive contest;* then would his Majesty's subjects discover what are the miseries of war, of which by the blessing of God they have hitherto had no knowledge: and the cultivation, the beauty and property of the country, would be destroyed, whatever might be the result of military operations. God forbid that I should be a witness, much less an actor in the scene! And I only hope that the King's Government will consider well what I have stated to your lordship ; will ascertain, as nearly as is in their power, the actual expense of employing a certain number of men in this country, beyond that of employing them at home or elsewhere ; and will keep up their force here on such a footing as will at all events secure their possession, without

keeping the transports, if it does not enable their commander to take advantage of events, and assume the offensive."*

Nor was it only in Spain and Portugal—that is, allied states—that Wellington adhered with unshaken constancy to the system of carrying on war from his own resources, and paying for everything without burdening the inhabitants of the theatre of war, or levying contributions on the allied states. He did the same in France, as soon as he carried his victorious arms into its territory ; and he won the hearts of its inhabitants thereby, as much as the imperial generals lost them, by the exactions they now made on their own people. No sooner did he enter the territory of the Great Nation than he issued a proclamation, in which he said :—

"The officers and soldiers of the army must recollect that their nations are at war with France solely because its ruler will not allow them to be at peace with him ; and they must not forget that the worst evils suffered by the enemy, in his profligate invasion of Spain and Portugal, have been occasioned by the irregularities of his soldiers, and their cruelties, authorised and encouraged by their chiefs, towards the unfortunate and peaceable inhabitants of the country. To revenge this conduct on the peaceful inhabitants of France would be unmanly, and unworthy of the nations to whom the commander of the forces now addresses himself, and at all events would be the occasion of similar and worse evils to the army at large, than those which the enemy's army have suffered in the Peninsula. The rules, therefore, which have been hitherto observed, in requiring and taking, and giving receipts for supplies from the country, are to be continued in the villages in France."†

And when he entered the north of France, after the battle of Waterloo, he was equally rigorous in preserving discipline, and paying for everything required for the army:—

"As the army is about to enter the French territory," said he, "the troops of the nations at present under the command of Field-marshal the Duke of Wellington must recollect that their respective sovereigns are in alliance with the King of France, and that France, therefore, should be treated as a friendly country. It is therefore required that nothing should be taken, either by officers or soldiers, for which payment is not made. The commissioners of the army will provide for the troops in the usual manner, and it is not permitted either to officers or men to extort contributions."‡

Such was the effect of these proclamations, and of the vigorous steps taken to compel obedience to them, and preserve the strictest discipline, that supplies of every sort flowed into the English camp, in the invasion both of the

* Wellington to the Earl of Liverpool, March 23, 1811. Gurwood, vii. 380.
† Proclamation by Wellington, Oct. 8, 1813. Gurwood, xi. 169.
‡ Wellington's General Orders, June 20, 1815. Gurwood, xii. 493.

south and north of France, as regularly as they did into Paris or London. "It is not to be told," said Soult, in his despatch to Napoleon, "what mischief this system of the English general has done us. *Every peasant wishes to be under his protection.*"

It is this circumstance which gives the campaigns and military measures of Wellington their great and lasting interest: it is their moral character which stamped upon them immortality. Not only was he intrusted with a noble cause, but he defended it by noble deeds. Repudiating the worldly doctrine, that the end will justify the means, he adhered to the opposite rule, that evil is *not* to be done that good may come of it. He preferred to bear obloquy, to submit to privation, to be cramped in resources, to be fettered in action, to reaping, when he might have done so, the fruits of injustice. He toiled on through poverty, hardship, and suffering, while his enemies were rioting in the fruits of rapine. He was content to be poor as a general as well as an individual, so as he was just. He did to others as he would have been done by. Intrusted with the defence of order, morality, and religion, he combated with the arms of justice alone. Long and severe in consequence was his trial, but great and glorious was his reward. He found it in the smiling and prosperous realms which he had protected by his arms; he found it in the wasted and desolate kingdoms which he wrested from the enemy; he found it in the unanimous horror which the injustice of his opponents produced; he found it in the universal gratitude of the world at their deliverance by his arms.

Observe with how piercing an eye, and graphic a hand, Wellington, after the first capture of Paris in 1814, painted the dreadful and lasting social as well as political evils which had been bequeathed to it by the Revolution: evils so far from being worn out, that they are only in their commencement:—

"Cette malheureuse Révolution et ses suites ont ruiné le pays de fond en comble. Tout le monde est pauvre, et ce qui est pis, leurs institutions empêchent qu'aucune famille devienne riche et puissante. Tous doivent donc nécessairement viser à remplir des emplois publics, non comme autrefois pour l'honneur de les remplir, mais pour avoir de quoi vivre. Tout le monde donc cherche de l'emploi public. Buonaparte laissa une armée d'un million d'hommes en France, outre les officiers prisonniers en Angleterre et en

Russie. Le roi ne peut pas en maintenir le quart. Tous ceux non employés sont mécontens. Buonaparte gouvernait directement la moitié de l'Europe, et indirectement presque l'autre moitié. Pour des causes à présent bien développées et connues, il employait une quantité infinie de personnes dans ses administrations ; et tous ceux employés ou dans les administrations extérieures, civiles, ou dans les administrations militaires des armées, sont renvoyés, et beaucoup de ceux employés dans les administrations intérieures. A cette classe nombreuse ajoutez la quantité d'émigrés et de personnes rentrés, tous mourant de faim, et tous convoitant de l'emploi public afin de pouvoir vivre ; et vous trouverez que plus de trois quarts de la classe de la société non employée à la main-d'œuvre ou à labourer la terre, sont en état d'indigence, et par conséquence mécontens. Si vous considérez bien ce tableau, qui est la stricte vérité, vous y verrez la cause et la nature du danger du jour. L'armée, les officiers surtout, sont mécontens. Ils le sont pour plusieurs raisons inutiles à détailler ici ; mais ce mécontentement pourra se vaincre en adoptant des mesures sages pour améliorer l'esprit." *

The historian of the Restoration, and its fall, will do well to ponder on this brief but comprehensive passage. Nowhere else in an equal space will he find an equally convincing and lucid description of the difficulties, in truth insurmountable, which attended the Restoration. They arose out of the entire destruction of the whole former foundation of society in France by the Revolution, and the reconstruction of the nation upon a foundation brilliant and dazzling, but of all others the most perilous—viz., *on the plunder and oppression of other states.* When the means of carrying on this iniquitous system of spoliation and injury were taken away, by the French armies being driven into their own territory, and their authority circumscribed by its limits, misery and penury at once became general, and discontent universal. It was like the curse suddenly shooting into the brain of Ladurlad, the moment he descended from the enchanted precincts of Mount Meru. All this discontent, vexation, and disappointment, was visited on the head of Louis XVIII. and the government of the Restoration, merely because they had the misfortune to be the public guardians at the time when the suffering was felt. The French were discontented at them, as a spoilt child is with its nurse, because it happens to be under his charge when its playthings are taken away. That was the real cause of the calamitous revolt of the Hundred Days : it was the cause of the equally calamitous Revolution of the Barricades: and when the sagacious intellect of Louis Philippe has ceased to direct the overgrown multitude of needy aspirants, it will

* Wellington to Dumouriez, Nov. 20, 1814. Gurwood, xi. 496.

again involve France in convulsion, and Europe in war and devastation.*

"I would sacrifice Gwalior, or every portion of India, ten times over, to preserve our credit for scrupulous good faith, and the advantages and honour we gained by the late war and the peace; and we must not fritter them away in arguments drawn from overstrained principles of the law of nations, which are not understood in this country. What brought me through the many difficulties in the war, and the negotiations for peace? The British good faith, and nothing else."†

What a testimony to the cardinal point of Indian, as of all other really wise and profound policy, by the conqueror of Assaye! But at the same time, no one more clearly saw, or has more clearly expressed, the vital distinction between Asiatic and European politics, or the absurdity of applying our European rules regarding state policy and the law of nations to a cluster of communities, where neither the one nor the other is in the slightest degree understood, but one, and one only maxim is invariably followed, which is, to yield to force. Speaking in 1804 on this subject, he says:—

"The Asiatic governments do not acknowledge, and hardly know of the rules and systems which have long been observed in Europe. Their governments are arbitrary; the objects of their policy are always shifting; they have no regular or established system, the object of which is to protect the weak against the strong. On the contrary, the object of each of them separately, and of all collectively, is to destroy the weak. And if by chance they should, by a sense of common danger, be induced for a season to combine their efforts for their mutual defence, the combination lasts only as long as it is attended with success: the first reverse dissolves it; and, at all events, it is dissolved long before the danger ceases, the apprehension of which originally caused it. The Company's government in India depends much on its reputation; and although it does not do so entirely, as contradistinguished from its real force, yet it is particularly desirable for a government situated as it is, never to engage in any project, the success of which may appear even doubtful. It is bound by acts of Parliament not to undertake any war of aggression, and not to conclude any but defensive alliances. These considerations prove that no permanent system can be adopted in India which shall preserve the weak against the strong, or keep all for any length of time in their relative situations, and the whole in peace. One power is indispensable, which, either by the superiority of its strength, its military system, or its resources, shall preponderate, and be able to protect all."‡

How just and prophetic a view, formed forty years ago, of the peculiar circumstances of the Indian Peninsula, and the necessities of Indian policy, which subsequent experience has done so much to confirm!

* Written in 1843. The Revolution and disastrous wars of 1848 were the accomplishment of this prediction.

† Despatch, March 17, 1804. *Maxims and Opinions*, p. 87.

‡ Wellington to Lord Wellesley, July 19, 1804. *Maxims and Opinions*, p. 88.

The despatches of the Duke of Wellington since 1815 have not been published, and probably will not be so during the lifetime of the present generation, as they relate of course to political and domestic concerns only. We are deprived, therefore, during the momentous period of British history which has since intervened, of the inestimable advantage of reading, as it were, his mind, in the confidential and unreserved communication of his ideas on passing events, in correspondence with his intimate friends. It may confidently be anticipated, that when his correspondence for that period comes to be published, embracing his views on so many changes, vital to the history and future fate of England—the Roman Catholic Relief Bill, the Reform Bill, Negro Emancipation, Free Trade and Protection, the Affghanistan and Chinese wars—it will exceed even the despatches relating to the war in interest and importance. At present we are confined on these interesting topics to selections from the Duke's parliamentary speeches, in which, though the same vigour of thought and brevity of expression are always conspicuous, we are not equally sure of finding the real opinions of the man, from the necessity under which the Minister often laboured of expressing the opinions of the cabinet, not his own; and the restraints under which the statesman was always laid, of using measured and often simulate expressions in parliamentary debate. Yet do the extracts from these speeches compose a rich fund of political wisdom, and convey as great an impression of the varied capacity of the Duke's mind; illustrating the truth of Johnson's saying, that intellectual strength is capable of being applied to any subject to which the will directs it.

"The theory of all legislation is founded in justice, and if we could be certain that legislative assemblies would on all occasions act according to the principles of justice, there would be no occasion for those checks and guards which we have seen established under the best systems. Unfortunately, however, experience tells us, that legislative assemblies are swayed by the fears and passions of individuals: when unchecked, they are tyrannical and unjust; nay more, it unfortunately happens too frequently, that the most tyrannical and unjust measures are the most popular. Those measures are frequently popular which deprive rich and powerful individuals, under the pretence of public advantage; and I tremble for a country in which, as in Spain, there is no barrier for the preservation of private property, excepting the justice of a legislative assembly possessing supreme powers."*

* Despatch, Jan. 29, 1813. *Maxims and Opinions*, 124.

This paragraph, written in relation to the popular legislature in 1813, at Cadiz, which was intriguing with Napoleon, and so nearly made shipwreck of the cause of Spanish independence, as it unquestionably has of that of Spanish freedom, contains a key to the political opinions of the Duke on all the great questions of social contest which afterwards came under his consideration in the internal government of Great Britain. Distrust of patriotic professions—too often, as Johnson said, "the last refuge of a scoundrel;" a thorough perception of the truth, that selfishness is the mainspring of human actions; a strong sense of the necessity of checks to cover this universal and indelible grasping propensity in all classes, formed his ruling principles. It does not appear that he possessed any very extensive historical information; indeed his active life, constantly in harness from the time he left school, rendered such acquisition almost impossible; but he possessed that strong sense and intuitive sagacity, which so often is more valuable to its possessor than profound learning; and which enabled him, from the observation of the events around him, and in which he bore a part, to arrive at the same conclusions which others would do from the most extensive course of historical reading and reflection.

On the much-debated question of Interference, or Non-interference, in the internal concerns of another state, he said—

"Much has been said here and elsewhere, at various times, on the question of interference by one state in the concerns of another. I do not admit the right of one country to interfere with the internal affairs of another country, except when the law of necessity or great political interests may render interference absolutely necessary; but I say that non-interference is the rule, and interference the exception: this is the ground of the policy on which this country acts. She disdains a daily interference with the concerns of other countries."*

It is impossible to express more clearly, in a few words, the ruling principle of British policy, as called into action during the whole course of the revolutionary war.

Wellington's opinions were always very strongly expressed on the paramount necessity of protection to agriculture in the British Empire; and of the ruinous effects which would result to all classes if the agricultural interests were to be

* Speech in Lords, Feb. 11, 1828. *Maxims and Opinions*, 142.

sacrificed to the clamours for *temporary* cheap bread on the part of the other classes of the community. He thus expressed himself in the great debate which took place on the subject in 1828 :—

"The number of individuals, either in Parliament or out of it, who maintain that foreign corn should be altogether duty-free, is very small indeed. Some persons undoubtedly think that a small fixed duty ought to be imposed; and if such a *fixed* duty were imposed, it should certainly be a very small one; but all agree that protection of some sort or another is indispensable. This opinion is founded on the great burden of taxation upon the country generally, as well as the particular burdens on land; and on the fact that the labouring classes here are better fed, clothed, and lodged, than the people of the same class in other countries. It is admitted by those who are in favour of a fixed low duty, that their expectation and intentions are, that the poorer lands of this country which have been brought into cultivation by the application of great labour, and the expenditure of a large amount of capital, should be at once thrown out of cultivation; and even the richer lands would become comparatively unprofitable, in consequence of the application of their system. But this country has been brought to its present high state of cultivation, and consequent internal wealth, by the fostering protection which has invariably been given to agriculture, and which has induced gentlemen to lay out their capital in redeeming waste lands and bringing them into cultivation. The result of such a system would be to throw out of cultivation the land thus redeemed from waste, to reduce the extent of cultivation of the richer lands, and consequently to lessen the productive power of the country, and finally to throw us for subsistence and support on foreign nations.

"I beg your lordships to reflect on the consequences which must result, if the Powers from whose dominions these resources are generally drawn, should think proper to lay a heavy tax on the export of such corn, or on its transit from one country to another. What would be the result of such a measure to this country—a measure too, which foreign states might, in certain circumstances, be perfectly justified in adopting? But supposing such moderation on the part of those states, that they should continue to allow us to draw our supplies from their dominions, yet you must recollect that this country would be constantly, under the proposed system of a fixed duty, placed in the precarious state in which it found itself in years of famine and scarcity, and would be exposed to the highest prices for wheat. The cost of production, for example, in Poland, would not be increased; but the prices would be regulated here, not by the cost of production there, *but by the scarcity price of this country*, and by the profits of all those concerned in the contemplated importation of corn. Under all these circumstances, a low fixed duty would not be productive of a diminution; on the contrary, it would in the end lead to an augmentation of price. But even if it were otherwise, would it be proper to adopt such a measure in reference to its effects in other respects? Look to Ireland, and consider what must be the inevitable results if agriculture be not encouraged in that country; a country which last year supplied Great Britain with 2,000,000 quarters of grain. What must be the effects of cutting off from that country nearly the only source of industry, the only manufacture, with one exception, which it possesses?

"But I speak not with reference to Ireland alone, but with reference to this country. The gentlemen of this country have, by the extent of their capital and the labour they have employed upon their estates, raised the agriculture of the kingdom to its present prosperous condition; and nothing

would be more unjust than to take from them that protection by which they have been enabled to bring cultivation to the state in which it now is, and to deprive them of those profits which are so justly their due, on account of the capital laid out by them. The merchant, the manufacturer, the poor, the whole public, are interested in the maintenance of the independent affluence of the nobility and gentry of the country; and the Government are interested in supporting their influence, on account of the assistance which has always been derived from them in every branch of internal government, and on account of the support they have afforded to Government under every circumstance. If it were in my power to make corn cheaper by diminishing the protection which the landed gentry have always received, I would not do it at the expense of Ireland, and of the evils which it must inflict upon the essential interests of this country."*

Lucid and forcible as these arguments are, they are by no means the strongest which can be advanced upon this all-important subject. Subsequent experience, and the more extensive statistical returns and researches of later times, have now established the vital facts—1. That the *monetary system* of the country, as established by the acts of 1819 and 1845, is dependent for its very existence upon the prevention of any considerable importation of foreign grain; and, 2. That the injury done to our *manufacturing interests*, by throwing any considerable portion of our territory out of grain cultivation, would be at least *ten times greater* than the good derived from the extension of the markets for our manufactures in foreign grain-growing states. The reason of the first is, that as the countries which supply us with grain have all adopted hostile tariffs against our manufactures, which experience shows are only made the more rigid the more we relax our commercial system, corn from abroad can be bought only with gold or silver; and thus a large importation of grain is immediately followed by a drain of the precious metals, a contraction of credit, and general shock to credit and commercial industry through the country. The dreadful and long-continued commercial distress in Great Britain, from 1839 to 1843, during four bad seasons, when the importation of grain was large, so fatal to a large part of the industry of the country, was chiefly owing to this cause. The reason of the second is to be found in the fact, that the nations who principally supply us with grain—Prussia, Poland, and Russia—have loaded our manufactures with such heavy duties, and their rural population is in so indigent a state, that they do not consume, per head, as

* Speech in Lords, March 21, 1828. *Maxims and Opinions*, 146, 148.

many *pence* worth of our manufactures, as the British labourer consumes pounds.* It would be a poor consolation to the British manufacturers, when labouring under the paralysis of the home-market for manufactures, consequent on the ruin of a large part of our annual income derived from land, to tell them that though they had destroyed a million of agricultural labourers at home, who consumed £7 a-head worth of their manufactures, they had called into existence an equal number of serfs in Poland or the Ukraine, who consumed 7d. per head.

On Roman Catholic Emancipation, before it was made a Government measure, the following decided opinion was expressed by the Duke in April 1828 :—

"There is no person in this house whose feelings and sentiments, after long consideration, are more decided than mine are with respect to the subject of the Roman Catholic claims; and I must say that, *until I see a very great change in that question, I certainly shall continue to oppose it.*"†

The "*very great change*" here alluded to, as the only circumstance which could induce Wellington to alter his opinion on Catholic Emancipation, was its being *taken up by Government as a Government question;* and so he explained the matter when he came to support the Catholic Relief Bill as prime minister, in March 1829. The grounds of this change were thus stated by the noble Duke, which we shall give in his own words, without adding any comments of our own. Hitherto, at least, the result has done anything rather than support its expediency.

"If I had been going to propose a measure which would introduce a predominant Catholic power into Parliament, I should then be doing that which is clearly inconsistent with the constitution. But I am not going to do any such thing: there are degrees of power, at least. Will any man venture to affirm that Catholic power does not at present exist, either here or in Ireland? I will address myself more particularly to noble lords who are so pointedly opposed to me, and I will ask them whether Roman Catholic

*	Population in 1836.	British Exports to, in 1836.	Proportion per head.
Russia, ...	60,000,000	£1,722,433	£0 0 8½
Prussia, ...	14,000,000	160,472	0 0 3½
Sweden, ...	3,000,000	113,308	0 0 9
Home-market, Britain, .	26,000,000	133,000,000	5 10 0
British West Indies, . .	900,000	3,786,000	3 12 0
Australia, ...	100,000	1,130,000	11 13 0

—PORTER'S *Parl. Tables*, 1836.

† Lords, April 28, 1828. *Maxims and Opinions*, 158.

power was not introduced into Ireland by measures of their own? Did not some noble lords exert themselves to the very utmost to produce that power, which has now rendered a measure like that which I have announced to Parliament absolutely necessary? As such is the case, I implore noble lords to look at the situation of the country, and the state of society which it has produced? Whether it has been brought about by the existence of these disabilities, or by the Catholic Association, I shall not say; but this I will say, that no man who has looked at the state of things for the last two years, can proceed longer upon the old system, in the existing condition of Ireland, and of men's opinions on the subject, both in that country and this. My opinion is, that it is the wish of the majority of the people that this question should be settled one way or other. It is upon this principle that I and my colleagues have determined to bring it before Parliament."*

The Duke's strenuous and uncompromising resistance to the Reform Bill is well known; as well as his celebrated question, "How, if this bill passes, is the King's government to be carried on?" Probably there has been no Administration since the completion of that great organic change which has not felt in their full bitterness the truth of these words. The future history of England, it is to be feared, will be little more than a commentary on their justice. Observe in what pregnant words Wellington, in the very outset, predicted its effects:—

"Throughout the whole empire, persons in the lowest condition of life, liable to, and even existing under, pernicious influences, are to have votes; or in other words, are to exercise political power. Persons in those stations do exercise political power already; but in a few places, in larger masses, preponderating over the other classes of society. What must we expect when these lower classes preponderate everywhere? We know what sort of representatives are returned by the places I have described: what are we to expect when the whole will be of the same description? We hear sometimes of radical reform; and the term applies to universal suffrage, annual parliaments, and their consequences. But I declare that, looking at these changes pervading every part of the representation, root and branch—destroying or changing everything which has existed, even to the relative numbers of the representatives from the three kingdoms, fixed by treaty, I should call this a radical reform, rather than a reform of any other description. I cannot but consider that the House of Commons returned by it will be a democratic assembly of the worst description; and that radical reform, vote by ballot, and all the evil consequences to be expected from the deliberations of such an assembly, must follow from its establishment. I entreat your lordships to pause before you agree to establish such a system in your country."†

May God in his mercy avert these anticipated evils from this country! But is there any man now bold enough to affirm that the Duke of Wellington in this instance is not to turn out in the end a true prophet?

* Lords, Feb. 5, 1829. *Maxims and Opinions*, 155, 156.
† Lords, Oct. 4, 1831. *Maxims and Opinions*, 247.

The intellectual character of Napoleon and Wellington are singularly in unison with the parts they were respectively called to play on the great theatre of the world. No man ever surpassed the French Emperor in the clearness of his ideas, or the stretch of his glance into the depths of futurity. But he was often misled by the vigour of his conceptions, and mistook the dazzling brilliancy of his own genius for the steady light of truth. With less ardour of imagination, less originality of thought, Wellington had incomparably more justness of judgment, and a far greater power of discriminating error from truth. The young and the ardent, who have life before them, will ever turn to the St Helena Memoirs for the views of a mind of the most profound and original cast, on the most important subjects of human thought. The mature and experienced, who have known its vicissitudes, and had experience of its errors, will rest with more confidence on the "Maxims and Opinions" of the Duke of Wellington, and marvel at the numerous instances in which his instinctive sagacity beheld the shadow of coming events amidst the clouds with which he was surrounded. No one ever read the speculations of the French Emperor without admiration at the originality of his ideas, and the originality of his conceptions; none can peruse the maxims of the English general without closing the book almost at every page to meditate on the wisdom and justice of his opinions. The genius of the former shared in the fire and animation of Homer's imagination; the mind of the latter exhibited the depth and solidity of Bacon's judgment.

But it was in the prevailing moral principles by which they were regulated, that the distinctive character of their minds was most strikingly evinced. Singleness of heart was the characteristic of the British hero; a sense of duty his ruling principle. Ambition actuated the French conqueror; a thirst for glory was his invariable motive. The former proceeded on the belief that the means, if justifiable, would finally work out the end; the latter, on the maxim that the end would in every case justify the means. The one exhibited the most shining example of splendid talents, devoted to temporal ambition; the other, the noblest instance of moral influence directed to exalted purposes. The former thought only in peace of accumulating the resources of

future war; the latter sought only in war the means of securing future peace, and finally sheathing the sword of conquest. Napoleon placed himself at the head of Europe, and desolated it for fifteen years with his warfare: Europe placed Wellington at the head of its armies, and he gave it thirty years of unbroken peace. The former was in the end led to ruin while blindly following the meteor of worldly greatness; the latter was unconsciously led to final greatness while only following the star of public duty. Wellington was a warrior, but he was so only to become a pacificator: he has seen shed the blood of men, but it was only to stop the shedding of human blood: he has borne aloft the sword of conquest, but it was only to plant in its stead the emblems of mercy:—*

> "Pulchrum eminere est inter illustres viros;
> Consulere patriæ; parcere afflictis; ferâ
> Cæde abstinere; tempus atque iræ dare,
> Orbi quietem, sæculo pacem suo.
> Hæc summa Virtus: petitur hac cœlum viâ."

* Some of these preceding sentences have been engrossed in the Character of Wellington at the close of the Waterloo chapter in the *History of Europe;* but they are here retained, as not less applicable to the present subject.

HUMBOLDT

[BLACKWOOD'S MAGAZINE, November 1845]

The Russian Emperor, who unquestionably has the power of licensing or prohibiting any of his subjects to travel at his own pleasure, is said to concede the liberty only to the men of intelligence and ability in his dominions : the fools are all obliged to remain at home. Hence the high reputation which the Muscovites enjoy abroad, and the frequent disappointment which is felt by travellers of other nations, when they visit their country. It is evident, from the character of the books of travels which every spring issue from the London press, with a few honourable exceptions, that no such restraining power exists in the British dominions. We have no individuals or particular works in view in these observations. We speak of things in general. If any one doubts their truth, let him inquire how many of the numberless Travels which annually issue from the British press are ever sought after, or heard of, five years after their publication. Our annual supply of ephemeral travels is far inferior in point of merit to the annual supply of novels. This is the more remarkable, because travels, if written in the right spirit, and by persons of capacity and taste, are among the most delightful, and withal instructive, species of composition of which literature can boast. They are so, because by their very nature they take the reader, as well as the writer, out of the sphere of every-day observation and commonplace remark. This is an immense advantage ; so great indeed, that, if made use of with tolerable capacity, it should give works of this sort a decided superiority in point of interest and utility over all others, excepting History and the higher species of Romance.

Commonplace is the bane of literature, especially in an old and civilised state; monotony, the thing to be principally dreaded. The very air is filled with ordinary ideas. General education, universal reading, unhappily make matters worse: they tend only to multiply the echoes of the original report: a new one has scarcely any chance of being heard amidst the ceaseless reverberation of the old. The more ancient a nation is, the more liable is it to be overwhelmed by this dreadful evil. The Byzantine empire, during a thousand years of civilisation and opulence, did not produce one work of original thought: five hundred years after the light of Athenian genius had been extinguished, the schools of Greece were still pursuing the beaten paths, and teaching the doctrines of Plato and Aristotle. It is the peculiar and prodigious advantage of travelling, that it counteracts this woful and degrading tendency, and by directing men's thoughts, as well as their steps, into foreign lands, has a tendency to induce into their ideas a portion of the variety and freshness which characterise the works of nature. Every person knows how great an advantage this proves in society. All must have felt what a relief it is to escape from the eternal round of local concerns or county politics, of parish grievances or neighbouring railroads, with which in every-day life we are beset, to the conversation of a person of intelligence who has visited foreign lands, and can give to the inquisitive at home a portion of the new ideas, images, and recollections with which his mind is stored. How, then, has it happened, that the same acquaintance with foreign and distant countries, which is universally felt to be such an advantage in conversation, is attended with such opposite effects in literature?—and that, while our travellers are often the most agreeable men in company, they are beyond all question the dullest in composition?

Much of this extraordinary and woful deficiency, we are persuaded, is owing to the limited range of objects to which the education of the young of the higher classes is so exclusively directed in Oxford and Cambridge. Greek and Latin, Aristotle's logic and classical versification, quadratic equations, conic sections, the differential calculus, are very good things; and we are well aware that it is by excellence in

them that the highest honours in these seminaries of learning can alone be attained. They are essential to the fame of a Parr or a Porson, a Herschel or a Whewell; but a very different species of mental training is required for advantageous travelling. Men will soon find that neither Greek prose nor Latin prose, Greek verse nor Latin verse, will avail them when they come to traverse the present states of the world. The most thorough master of the higher mathematics will find his knowledge of scarcely any avail in Italy or Egypt, or the Alps or the Andes. These acquisitions are doubtless among the greatest triumphs of the human understanding; and they are calculated to raise a few, perhaps one in a hundred, to distinction in classical or scientific pursuits; but upon the minds of the remaining ninety-nine, they produce no sort of impression. Nature simply rejects them: they are not the food which she requires. They do not do much mischief to such persons in themselves; but they are of incalculable detriment by the time and the industry which they absorb to no available purpose. Ten years of youth—the most valuable and important period of life—are wasted in studies which, to nineteen-twentieths of the persons engaged in them, are of no use whatever in future years. Thus our young men, of the highest rank and best connexions, are sent out into the world without any ideas or information which can enable them to visit foreign countries with advantage. Need we wonder that, when they come to write and publish their travels, they produce such a woful brood of ephemeral bantlings?*

The reaction against this enormous evil in a different class of society, has produced another set of errors in education—of an opposite description, but perhaps still more fatal to the formation of the mental character, which is essential to the useful or elevating observation of foreign countries. The commercial and middle classes of society, educated at the London University, or any of the numerous academies which have sprung up in all parts of the country, have gone into the other extreme. Struck with the uselessness, to the great bulk of students, of the classical minutiæ required at one of

* We lately heard of a young man, who had gone through the examination at Cambridge with distinction, inquiring, "whether the Greek church *were Christians?*" What sort of a traveller would he make in the East or Russia?

the universities, and the mathematical depth deemed indispensable at the other, they have turned education into an entirely different channel. Nothing was deemed worthy of serious attention, except what led to some practical object in life. Education was considered by their founders as merely a step to making money. Science became a trade—a mere handmaid to art. Mammon was all in all. Their instruction was entirely utilitarian. Mechanics and Medicine, Hydraulics and Chemistry, Pneumatics and Hydrostatics, Anatomy and Physiology, constituted the grand staples of their education. What they taught was adapted only for professional students. One would suppose, from examining their course of study, that all men were to be either doctors or surgeons, apothecaries or druggists, mechanics, shipwrights, or civil engineers. No doubt we must have such persons; no doubt it is indispensable that places of instruction should exist in which they can learn their various and highly important avocations; but is that the school in which the enlarged mind is to be formed, the varied information acquired, the appreciation of the grand and the beautiful imbibed, which are essential to an accomplished and really useful writer of travels? Sulphuric acid and Optics, Anatomy and Mechanics, will do many things; but they will never make an observer of Nature, a friend of Man, a fit commentator on the world of God.

Persons of really cultivated minds and enlarged views will probably find it difficult to determine which of these opposite systems of education is the best calculated to attain what seems the grand object of modern instruction, the cramping and limiting the human mind. But without entering upon this much-disputed point—upon which much is to be said on both sides, and in which each party will perhaps be found to be in the right when they assail their opponents, and in the wrong when they defend themselves—it is more material to our present purpose to observe that both are equally fatal to the acquisition of the varied information, and the imbibing of the refined and elegant taste, which are essential to an accomplished writer of travels. Only think what mental qualifications are required to form such a character! An eye for the sublime and the beautiful, the power of graphically describing natural scenery, a

vivid perception of the peculiarities of national manners, habits, and institutions, will at once be acknowledged to be the first requisites. But in addition to this, how much is necessary to make a work which shall really stand the test of time, in the delineation of the various countries of the world, and the existing state of their inhabitants! How many branches of knowledge are called for, how many sources of information required, how many enthusiastic pursuits necessary, to enable the traveller worthily to discharge his mission! Eyes and no Eyes are nowhere more conspicuous in human affairs; and, unhappily, eyes are never given but to the mind which has already seen and learned much.

An acquaintance with the history of the country and the leading characters in its annals, is indispensable to enable the traveller to appreciate the historical associations connected with the scenes; a certain degree of familiarity with its principal authors, to render him alive to that noblest of interests, that arising from the recollection of Genius and intellectual Achievement. Without an acquaintance with political economy and the science of government, he will be unable to give any useful account of the social state of the country, or to furnish the most valuable of all information, that relating to the institutions, the welfare, and the happiness of man. Statistics form almost an indispensable part of every book of travels which professes to communicate information; but mere statistics are little better than unmeaning figures, if the generalising and philosophical mind is wanting, which, from previous acquaintance with the subjects on which they bear, and the conclusions which it is of importance to deduce from them, knows what is to be selected and what laid aside from the mass. Science, to the highest class of travellers, is an addition of the utmost moment; as it alone can render their observations of use to that most exalted of all objects, an extension of the boundaries of knowledge, and an enlarged acquaintance with the laws of nature. The soul of a poet is indispensable to form the most interesting species of travels—a mind, and still more a heart, capable of appreciating the grand and the beautiful in Art and in Nature. The eye of a painter and the hand of a draughtsman are equally important to enable him to observe with accuracy the really interesting features

of external things, and convey, by faithful and graphic description, a correct impression of what he has seen to the mind of the reader. Such are the qualifications necessary for a really great traveller. It may be too much to hope to find these ever united in one individual; but the combination of the majority of them is indispensable to distinction or lasting fame in this branch of literature.

Compare these necessary and indispensable qualifications for a great traveller with those which really belong to our young men who are sent forth from our universities or academies into the world, and take upon themselves to communicate what they have seen to others. Does the youth come from Oxford?—his head is full of Homer and Virgil, Horace and Æschylus: he could tell you the amours of Mars and Venus, of Jupiter and Leda; he might rival Orpheus or Pindar in the melody of his Greek verses, and Cicero or Livy in the correctness of his Latin prose. But as, unfortunately, he has to write neither about gods nor goddesses, but mere mortals, and neither in Greek verse nor Latin verse, but in good English prose, he is utterly at a loss alike for thought and expression: he neither knows what to communicate, nor is he master of the language in which it is to be conveyed. Hence his recorded travels dwindle away into a mere scrap-book of classical quotations—a transcript of immaterial Latin inscriptions, destitute of either energy, information, or eloquence. Does he come from Cambridge?—he could solve cubic equations as well as Cardan; is a more perfect master of logarithms than Napier; could explain the laws of physical astronomy better than Newton, and rival Lagrange in the management of the differential calculus. But as, unluckily, the world which he visits, and in which we live, is neither a geometric world nor an algebraic world, a world of conic sections or fluxions, but a world of plains and mountains, of lakes and rivers, of men and women, flesh and blood, he finds his knowledge of little or no avail. He takes scarcely any interest in the sublunary or contemptible objects which engross the herd of ordinary mortals; associates only with the learned and the recluse in a few universities; and of course comes back without having a word to utter, or a sentence to write, which can interest the bulk of readers. Does he come from the

London University, or any of the provincial academies?—he is thinking only of railroads or mechanics, of chemistry or canals, of medicine or surgery: he could descant without end on sulphuric acid or decrepitating salts, on capacity for caloric or galvanic batteries, on steam engines and hydraulic machines, on the discoveries of Davy or the conclusions of Berzelius, on the systems of Hutton or Werner, of Liebig or Cuvier. But although an acquaintance with these different branches of practical knowledge is an important preliminary to a traveller in foreign countries making himself acquainted with the improvements they have respectively made in the useful or practical arts, they will never qualify for the composition of a great or lasting book of travels. They would make an admirable course of instruction for the overseer of a manufactory, of a canal or railway company, of an hospital or an infirmary, who was to visit foreign countries in order to pick up the latest improvements in practical mechanics, chemistry, or medicine; but have we really become a race of shopkeepers or doctors, and is Science sunk to be the mere handmaid of Art?

We despair, therefore, as long as the present system of education prevails in England, (and Scotland of course follows in the wake of its great neighbour,) of seeing any traveller arise of lasting celebrity, or book of travels written which shall attain to durable fame. The native vigour and courage, indeed, of the Anglo-Saxon race is perpetually impelling numbers of energetic young men into the most distant parts of the earth; and immense is the addition which they are annually making to the sum-total of *geographical* knowledge. We have only to look at one of our recent maps, as compared to those which were published fifty years ago, to see how much we owe to the courage and enterprise of Parry and Franklin, Park and Horneman, of Burckhardt and Lander. But giving all due credit—and none give it more sincerely than we do—to the vigour and courage of these very eminent men, it is impossible not to feel that, however well fitted they were to explore unknown and desert regions, and carry the torch of civilisation into the wilderness of nature, they had not the mental training, or varied information, or powers of composition, necessary to form a great *writer of travels.* Clarke and Bishop Heber

are most favourable specimens of English travellers, and do honour to the great universities of which they were such distinguished ornaments; but they did not possess the varied accomplishments and information of some of the Continental travellers. Their education, and very eminence in their peculiar and exclusive lines, precluded it. What is wanting in that character above everything is an acquaintance with, and interest in, a *great many and different branches of knowledge*, joined to considerable power of composition, and unconquerable energy of mind; and that is precisely what our present system of education in England renders it almost impossible for any one to acquire. The system pursued in the Scottish universities, undoubtedly, is more likely to form men capable of rising to eminence in this department; and the names of Park and Bruce show what travellers they are capable of sending forth. But the attractions of rank, connexion, and fashion, joined to the advantage of speaking correct English, are fast drawing a greater proportion of the youth of the higher ranks in Scotland to the English universities; and the education pursued at home, therefore, is daily running more and more into merely utilitarian and professional channels. That system is by no means the one calculated to form an accomplished and interesting writer of travels.

In this deficiency of materials for the formation of a great body of male travellers, the ladies have kindly stepped in to supply the deficiency; and numerous works have issued from the press, from the pens of the most accomplished and distinguished of our aristocratic beauties. But alas! there is no royal road to literature, any more than geometry. Almack's and the exclusives, the opera and ducal houses, the society of lordlings and guardsmen, form an admirable school for manners, and are an indispensable preliminary to success at courts and coronations, in ball-rooms and palaces. But the world is not made up of courts or palaces, of kings or princes, of dukes or marquesses. Men have something more to think of than the reception which the great world of one country gives to the great world of another; of the balls to which they are invited, or the fêtes which they grace by their charms; or the privations to which elegant females, nursed in the lap of luxury, are exposed in roughing it amidst

the snows of the North or the deserts of the South. We are grateful to the lady travellers for the brilliant and interesting pictures they have given us of capitals and manners,* of costume and dress, and of many eminent men and women, whom their rank and sex gave them peculiar opportunities of portraying. But we can scarcely congratulate the country upon having found in them a substitute for learned and accomplished travellers of the other sex; or formed a set-off, on the part of Great Britain, to the Humboldts, the Chateaubriands, and Lamartines of continental Europe.

It is impossible to contemplate the works of these great men without arriving at the conclusion, that it is in the varied and discursive education of the Continent that a foundation has been laid for the extraordinary eminence which its travellers have attained. It is the vast number of subjects with which the young men are in some degree made acquainted at the German universities, which has rendered them so capable in after life of travelling with advantage in any quarter of the globe, and writing their travels with effect. This advantage is in a peculiar manner conspicuous in HUMBOLDT, whose mind, naturally ardent and capacious, had been surprisingly enlarged and extended by early and various study in the most celebrated German universities. He acquired, in consequence, so extraordinary a command of almost every department of physical and political science, that there is hardly any branch of it in which facts of importance may not be found in his travels. He combined, in a degree perhaps never before equalled in one individual, the most opposite and generally deemed irreconcilable mental qualities. To an ardent poetical temperament, and an eye alive to the most vivid impressions of external things, he united a power of eloquence rarely given to the most gifted orators, and the habit of close and accurate reasoning which belongs to the intellectual powers adapted for the highest branches of the exact sciences. An able mathematician, a profound natural philosopher, an exact observer of nature, he was at the same time a learned statistician, an indefatigable social observer, an unwearied philanthropist, and the

* Lady Londonderry's description of Moscow is the best in the English language.

most powerful describer of nature that perhaps ever undertook to portray her great and glorious features. It is this extraordinary combination of qualities that render his works so surprising and valuable. The intellectual and imaginative powers rarely coexist in remarkable vigour in the same individual; but when they do, they produce the utmost triumphs of the human mind. Leonardo da Vinci, Johnson, Burke, and Humboldt, do not resemble single men, how great soever, but rather clusters of separate persons, each supremely eminent in his peculiar sphere.

Frederick Henry Alexander, Baron of Humboldt, brother of the celebrated Prussian statesman of the same name, was born at Berlin on the 14th September 1769, the same year with Wellington, Goethe, Marshal Ney, and many other illustrious men. He received an excellent and extensive education at the university of Göttingen, and at an academy at Frankfort on the Oder. His first step into the business of life was as a clerk in the mercantile house of Buch, at Hamburg, where he soon made himself master of accounts and book-keeping, and acquired that perfect command of arithmetic, and habit of bringing everything, where it is possible, to the test of figures, by which his political and scientific writings are so pre-eminently distinguished. But his disposition was too strongly bent on scientific and physical pursuits, to admit of his remaining long in the comparatively obscure and uninviting paths of commerce. His thirst for travelling was from his earliest years unbounded, and it ere long received ample gratification. His first considerable journey was with two naturalists of distinction, Messrs Fontu and Genns, with whom he travelled in Germany, Holland, and England, in the course of which his attention was chiefly directed to mineralogical pursuits. The fruit of his observations appeared in a work, the first he ever published, which was printed at Brunswick in 1790, when he was only twenty-one years of age, entitled *Observations sur les Basaltes du Rhin.*

To extend his information, already very considerable, on mineralogical science, Humboldt in 1791 repaired to Freyberg, to profit by the instructions of the celebrated Werner; and, when there, he devoted himself, with the characteristic ardour of his disposition, to make himself master of geology

and botany, and prosecuted in an especial manner the study of the fossil remains of plants in the rocks around that place. In 1792, he published at Berlin a learned treatise, entitled *Specimen Florœ Friebergensis Subterraniœ;* which procured for him such celebrity that he was soon after appointed director-general of the mines in the principalities of Anspach and Bayreuth, in Franconia. His ardent and philanthropic disposition there exerted itself for several years in promoting, to the utmost of his power, various establishments of public utility; among others, the public school of Streben, from which have already issued many distinguished scholars. Charmed by the recent and brilliant discoveries of M. Galvani in electricity, he next entered with ardour into that new branch of science; and, not content with studying it in the abstract, he made a great variety of curious experiments on the effects of galvanism on his own person, and published the result in two octavos, at Berlin, in 1796, enriched by the notes of the celebrated naturalist Blümenbach. This work was translated into French by J. F. Jadelot, and published at Paris in 1799. Meanwhile Humboldt, consumed with an insatiable desire for travelling, resumed his wanderings, and roamed over Switzerland and Italy, after which he returned to Paris in 1797, and formed an intimacy with a congenial spirit, M. Aimé Bonpland, who afterwards became the companion of his South American travels. At this time he formed the design of joining the expedition of Captain Baudin, who was destined to circumnavigate the globe; but the continuance of hostilities prevented him from carrying that design into effect. Baffled in that project, upon which his heart was much set, Humboldt went to Marseilles with the intention of embarking on board a Swedish frigate for Algiers, from whence he hoped to join Napoleon's expedition to Egypt, and cross from the banks of the Nile to the Persian Gulf and the vast regions of the East. This was the turning point of his destiny. The Swedish frigate never arrived; the English cruisers rendered it impossible to cross the Mediterranean, except in a neutral vessel; and after waiting with impatience for about two months, he set out for Madrid, in the hope of finding means in the Peninsula of passing into Africa from the opposite shores of Andalusia.

Upon his arrival in the Spanish capital, the German philosopher was received with all the distinction which his scientific reputation deserved; and he obtained from the Government the extraordinary and unlooked-for boon of a formal leave to travel over the whole South American colonies of the monarchy. This immediately determined Humboldt. He entered with ardour into the new prospects thus opened to him; wrote to his friend Aimé Bonpland to propose that he should join him in the contemplated expedition—an offer which was gladly accepted; and soon the visions of Arabia and the Himalaya were supplanted by those of the Pampas of Buenos Ayres and the Cordilleras of Peru. The two friends embarked at Corunna on board a Spanish vessel, and after a prosperous voyage, reached Cumana, in the New World, in July 1799. From that city they made their first expedition in Spanish America, during which they travelled over Spanish Guiana, New Andalusia, and the Missions of the Caribbees, from whence they returned to Cumana in 1800. There they embarked for the Havannah; and the whole of the summer of that year was spent in traversing the great and interesting island of which that city is the capital, on which he collected much important and valuable information. In September 1801, he set out for Quito, where he arrived in January of the succeeding year, and was received with the most flattering distinction. Having reposed for some months from their fatigues, Humboldt and Bonpland proceeded, in the first instance, to survey the country which had been devastated in 1797 by the dreadful earthquake which swallowed up in a minute forty thousand persons. Then he set out, in June 1802, to visit the volcano of Tungaragno and the summit of Chimborazo. They ascended to the height of 19,500 feet on the latter mountain; but were prevented from reaching the top by impassable ravines. Perched on one of the summits, however, of this giant of mountains, amidst ice and snow, far above the abode of any living creature, except the condor, they made a great variety of most interesting observations, which have proved of essential service to the cause of science. They were 3485 feet above the most elevated point which the learned Condamine, who had hitherto ascended highest, reached in 1745, but were still 2140 feet

below the loftiest summit of the mountain. They determined, by a series of strict trigonometrical observations, the height of the chief peaks of that celebrated ridge—

> "Where Andes, giant of the western star,
> Looks from his throne of clouds o'er half the world."

Having returned, after this fatiguing and dangerous mountain expedition, to Lima, Humboldt remained several months enjoying the hospitality of its kind-hearted inhabitants, whose warm feelings and excellent qualities excited in him the warmest admiration. In the neighbouring harbour of Callao, he was fortunate enough to see the passage of the planet Mercury over the disc of the sun, of which transit he made very important observations; and from thence passed into the province of New Spain, where he remained an entire year, sedulously engaged in agricultural, political, and statistical, as well as physical inquiries, the fruits of which added much to the value of his published travels. In April 1803, he proceeded to Mexico, where he was so fortunate as to discover the only specimen known to exist of the tree called *Cheirostomon Platanoides*, of the highest antiquity and gigantic dimensions. During the remainder of that year, he made several excursions over the mountains and valleys of Mexico, inferior to none in the world in interest and beauty; and in autumn 1804, embarked for the Havannah, from whence he passed into Philadelphia, and traversed a considerable part of the United States. At length, in 1805, he returned to Europe, and arrived safe at Paris in November of that year, bringing with him, in addition to the observations he had made, and recollections with which his mind was fraught, the most extensive and varied collection of specimens of plants and minerals that ever was brought from the New World. His herbarium consisted of four thousand different plants, many of them of extreme rarity even in South America, and great part of which were previously unknown in Europe. His mineralogical collection was of equal extent and value. But by far the most important additions he has made to the cause of science, consist in the vast series of observations he has made in the New World, which have set at rest a great many disputed points in geography, mineralogy, and zoology, concerning that interesting and, in a great degree, unknown

part of the world, and extended in a proportional degree the boundaries of knowledge regarding it. Nor have his labours been less important in collecting the most valuable statistical information regarding the Spanish provinces of those vast regions, especially the condition of the Indian, negro, and mulatto race which exist within them, and the amount of the precious metals annually raised from their mines: subjects of vast importance to Great Britain, and especially to its colonial and commercial interests, but which have hitherto been in an unaccountable manner neglected, even by those whose interests and fortunes were entirely wound up in the changes connected with these vital subjects.

The remainder of Baron Humboldt's life has been chiefly devoted to the various and important publications, in which he has embodied the fruit of his vast and extensive researches in the New World. In many of these he has been assisted by M. Aimé Bonpland, who, his companion in literary labour as in the danger and fatigues of travelling, has, with the generosity of a really great mind, been content to diminish, perhaps destroy, his prospect of individual celebrity, by associating himself with the labours of his illustrious friend. Pursued even in mature years by the desire of fame, the thirst for still greater achievements, which belongs to minds of the heroic cast, whether in war or science, he conceived, at a subsequent period, the design of visiting the upper provinces of India and the Himalaya range. After having ascended higher than man had yet done on the elevated ridges of the New World, he was consumed with a thirst to surmount the still more lofty summits of the Old, which have remained in solitary and unapproachable grandeur since the waves of the Deluge first receded from their sides. But the East India Company, within whose dominions, or at least beneath whose influence, the highest ridges of the Himalaya are situated, gave no countenance to the design, and even, it is said, refused liberty to the immortal naturalist to visit their extensive territories. Whatever opinion we may form on the liberality or wisdom of this resolution, considered with reference to the interests, physical, moral, and political, of British India, it is not to be regretted, for the cause of science and literature over the

world, that the great traveller has been prevented from setting out late in life to a fresh region of discovery. It has left the remainder of his life, and his yet undiminished powers, to illustrate and explain what he has already seen. To do that, was enough for the ordinary span of human life.

Humboldt's works relating to the New World are very numerous. I. He first published, in 1805, at Paris, in four volumes quarto, the *Personal Narrative* of his travels from 1799 to 1804. Of this splendid and interesting work, several editions have since been published in French, in twelve volumes octavo. It is upon it that his fame with the generality of readers mainly rests. II. *Vues des Cordilléras et Monumens des Peuples Indigènes de l'Amerique* —two volumes folio : Paris, 1811. This magnificent work, the cost of which is now £130, contains by far the finest views of the Andes in existence. Its great price renders it very scarce, and not more than a few copies are to be met with in Great Britain ; but a cheap edition, without the great plates, was published at Paris in 1817. III. *Recueil d'Observations Astronomiques, et de Mesures exécutées dans le Nouveau Continent:* two volumes quarto. This learned work contains the result of Humboldt's astronomical and trigonometrical observations on the lunar distances, the eclipses of the satellites of Jupiter, the transit of Mercury, and upwards of five hundred elevated points in the New World, taken from barometrical observations, with all the requisite allowances and calculations carefully made. IV. *Essai sur la Géographie des Plantes, ou Tableau Physique des Régions Equinoxiales:* in quarto, with a great map. V. *Plantes Equinoxiales recueillies au Mexique, dans l'ile de Cuba, dans les Provinces de Caraccas,* &c.: two volumes folio. A splendid and very costly work. VI. *Monographie des Mélastomes:* two volumes folio. A most curious and interesting work on a most interesting subject. VII. *Nova Genera et Species Plantarum:* three volumes folio. Containing an account of the botanical treasures collected by him in the New World, and brought home in his magnificent herbarium. VIII. *Recueil des Observations de Zoologie et d'Anatomie Comparée faites dans un Voyage aux Tropiques:* two volumes quarto. IX. *Essai Politique*

sur la Nouvelle Espagne—1811 : two volumes quarto. Of this admirable work a subsequent edition has been published in 1822, in four volumes octavo. It contains an astonishing collection of important statistical facts, arranged and digested with the utmost ability, and interspersed with political and philosophical reflections on the state of the human race, and the relation of society in the New World. X. *Ansichten der Natur*—Tubingen, 1808 : in octavo. It is remarkable that this is the only one of the learned author's works on Spanish America which originally appeared in his own language ; but it was soon translated into French under the title of *Tableaux de la Nature* —Paris, 1808. It contains a series of descriptions of the different styles of scenery and remarkable objects in the vast regions he had visited, portrayed with all the vigour and accuracy for which the author is distinguished. XI. *De Distributione Geographicâ Plantarum secundum Cœli Temperiem et Altitudinem Montium, Prolegomena* — 8vo. : Paris, 1817. The title of this work explains its object and its importance, in describing a portion of the globe consisting of such lofty and successive ridges and table-lands as rise from the level of the sea to the summits of the Cordilleras of Mexico and Peru. XII. *Sur l'Elévation des Montagnes de l'Inde*—8vo. : Paris, 1818. A work prepared when the author was contemplating a journey to the Himalaya and mountains of Thibet. XIII. *Carte du Fleuve Orenoque.* Presented to the Academy of Sciences in 1817. M. Humboldt has there demonstrated the singular fact of the junction of the great rivers Orinoco and the Amazons by the intermediate waters of the Rio Negro—a fact which the sagacity of d'Anville had long ago led him to suspect, but which the travels of the indefatigable German has established beyond a doubt. XIV. *Examen Critique de l'Histoire de la Géographie du Nouveau Continent, et du Progrès de l'Astronomie Nautique aux* 15*me et* 16*me siècles* — Paris, 1837. XV. *Cosmos :* in German—a "Scheme of a Physical Description of the Universe." This last work embraces a much wider sphere of learning and speculation than any of the preceding, and is more characteristic of the vast erudition and ardent genius of the author.

From the brief account which has now been given of the published works of this indefatigable traveller and author, the reader will be able to appreciate the extent and variety of his scientific and political attainments. We shall now present him under a different aspect, as an eloquent and almost unrivalled describer of nature. It need hardly be said that it is on these splendid pictures, more even than the numerous and valuable additions he has made to the treasures of science, that his reputation with the world in general is founded.

The rapids of the Orinoco—one of the most striking scenes in America—are thus described by our author :*—

"When we arrived at the top of the Cliff of Marimi, the first object which caught our eye was a sheet of foam, above a mile in length, and half a mile in breadth. Enormous masses of black rock, of an iron hue, started up here and there out of its snowy surface. Some resembled huge basaltic cliffs resting on each other; many, castles in ruins, with detached towers and fortalices, guarding their approach from a distance. Their sombre colour formed a contrast with the dazzling whiteness of the foam. Every rock, every island, was covered with flourishing trees, the foliage of which is often united above the foaming gulf by creepers hanging in festoons from their opposite branches. The base of the rocks and islands, as far as the eye can reach, is lost in the volumes of white smoke, which boil above the surface of the river; but above these snowy clouds, noble palms, from eighty to a hundred feet high, rise aloft, stretching their summits of dazzling green towards the clear azure of heaven. With the changes of the day these rocks and palm-trees are alternately illuminated by the brightest sunshine, or projected in deep shadow on the surrounding surge. Never does a breath of wind agitate the foliage, never a cloud obscure the vault of heaven. A dazzling light is ever shed through the air, over the earth enamelled with the loveliest flowers, over the foaming stream stretching as far as the eye can reach; the spray, glittering in the sunbeams, forms a thousand rainbows, ever changing, yet ever bright, beneath whose arches islands of flowers, rivalling the very hues of heaven, flourish in perpetual bloom. There is nothing austere or sombre, as in northern climates, even in this scene of elemental strife; tranquillity and repose seem to sleep on the very edge of the abyss of waters. Neither time, nor the sight of the Cordilleras, nor a long abode in the charming valleys of Mexico, have been able to efface from my recollection the impression made by these cataracts. When I read the description of similar scenes in the East, my mind sees again in clear vision the sea of foam, the islands of flowers, the palm-trees surmounting the snowy vapours. Such recollections, like the memory of the sublimest works of poetry and the arts, leave an impression which is never to be effaced, and which, through the whole of life, is associated with every sentiment of the grand and the beautiful."—Vol. vii. 171, 172.

Such is a specimen of the descriptive powers of the great

* We have translated all the passages ourselves. A very good translation of Humboldt's *Personal Narrative* was published many years ago, by Miss H. Williams; but we could not resist the pleasure of trying to transfer to English such noble specimens of descriptive eloquence.

German natural philosopher, geographer, botanist, and traveller. When our senior wranglers from Cambridge, our high-honoured men from Oxford, or lady travellers from London, produce a parallel to it, we shall hope that England is about to compete with the Continental nations in the race of illustrious travellers—but not till then.

As a contrast to this, we cannot resist the pleasure of laying before our readers the following striking description of a night on the Orinoco, in the placid part of its course, amidst the vast forests of the tropical regions :—

"The night was calm and serene, and a beautiful moon shed a radiance over the scene. The crocodiles lay extended on the sand, placed in such a manner that they could watch our fire, from which they never turned aside their eyes. Its dazzling evidently attracted them, as it does fish, crabs, and the other inhabitants of the waters. The Indians pointed out to us in the sand the recent marks of the feet of three tigers, a mother and two young, which had crossed the open space between the forest and the water. Finding no tree upon the shore, we sank the end of our oars into the sand, in order to form poles for our tents. Everything remained quiet till eleven at night, when suddenly there arose, in the neighbouring forest, a noise so frightful that it became impossible to shut our eyes. Amidst the voice of so many savage animals, which all roared or cried at once, our Indians could only distinguish the howling of the jaguar, the yell of the tiger, the roar of the cougar, or American lion, and the screams of some birds of prey. When the jaguars approached near to the edge of the forest, our dogs, which to that moment had never ceased to bark, suddenly housed, and, crouching, sought refuge under the shelter of our hammocks. Sometimes, after an interval of silence, the growl of the tiger was heard from the top of the trees, followed immediately by the cries of the monkey tenants of their branches, which fled the danger by which they were menaced.

"I have painted, feature by feature, these nocturnal scenes on the Orinoco, because, having but lately embarked on it, we were as yet unaccustomed to their wildness. They were repeated for months together, every night that the forest approached the edge of the river. Despite the evident danger by which one is surrounded, the security which the Indian feels comes to communicate itself to your mind; you become persuaded with him, that all the tigers fear the light of fire, and will not attack a man when lying in his hammock. In truth, the instances of attacks on persons in hammocks are extremely rare; and during a long residence in South America, I can only call to mind one instance of a Llanero, who was found torn to pieces in his hammock, opposite the island of Uhagua.

"When one asks the Indians what is the cause of this tremendous noise, which at a certain hour of the night the animals of the forest make, they answer gaily, 'They are saluting the full moon." I suspect the cause in general is some quarrel or combat which has arisen in the interior of the forest. The jaguars, for example, pursue the pecaris and tapirs, which, having no means of defence but their numbers, fly in dense bodies, and press, in all the agony of terror, through the thickets which lie in their way. Terrified at this strife, and the crashing of boughs or rustling of thickets which they hear beneath them, the monkeys on the highest branches set up discordant cries of terror on every side. The din soon wakens the parrots and other birds which fill the woods, they instantly scream in the most violent way, and ere long the forest is in an uproar. We soon found that it

is not so much during a full moon, as on the approach of a whirlwind or a storm, that this frightful concert arises among the wild beasts. 'May heaven give us a peaceable night and rest, like other mortals!' was the exclamation of the monk who had accompanied us from the Rio Negro, as he lay down to repose in our bivouac. It is a singular circumstance to be reduced to such a petition in the midst of the solitude of the woods. In the hotels of Spain, the traveller fears the sound of the guitar from the neighbouring apartment; in the bivouacs of the Orinoco, which are spread on the open sand, or under the shade of a single tree, what you have to dread is the infernal cries which issue from the adjoining forest."—Vol. vi. 222–3.

One of the most remarkable of the many remarkable features of nature in South America, is the prodigious plains which, under the name of Llanos and Pampas, stretch from the shores of the Atlantic to the foot of the Andes, over a space from fifteen hundred to two thousand miles in breadth. Humboldt traversed them more than once in their full extent, and has given the following striking description of their remarkable peculiarities:—

"In many geographical works, the savannahs of South America are termed *prairies*. That word, however, seems not properly applicable to plains of pasturage, often exclusively dry, though covered with grass four or five feet high. The Llanos and Pampas of South America are true *steppes:* they present a rich covering of verdure during the rainy season, but in the months of drought the earth assumes the appearance of a desert. The turf is then reduced to powder, the earth gapes in huge cracks; the crocodiles and great serpents lie in a dormant state in the dried mud, till the return of rains, and the rise of the waters in the great rivers, which flood the vast expanse of level surface, awaken them from their long slumber. These appearances are often exhibited over an arid surface of fifty or sixty leagues square—everywhere, in short, where the savannah is not traversed by any of the great rivers. On the borders, on the other hand, of the streams, and around the lakes, which in the dry season retain a little brackish water, the traveller meets from time to time, even in the most extreme drought, groves of Mauritia, a species of palm, the leaves of which, spreading out like a fan, preserve amidst the surrounding sterility a brilliant verdure.

"The steppes of Asia are all out of the region of the tropics, and form in general the summit of very elevated plateaux. America also presents, on the reverse of the mountains of Mexico, of Peru, and of Quito, steppes of considerable extent. But the greatest steppes, the Llanos of Cumana, of Caraccas, and of Meta, all belong to the equinoctial zone, and are very little elevated above the level of the ocean. It is this which gives them their peculiar characters. They do not contain, like the steppes of Southern Asia and the deserts of Persia, lakes without issue, or rivers which lose themselves in the sand or in subterraneous filtrations. The Llanos of South America incline towards the east and the south; their waters are tributary to the Orinoco, the Amazon, or the Rio de la Plata.

"What most strongly characterises the savannahs or steppes of South America, is the entire absence of hills or inequalities of any kind. The soil for hundreds of miles together is perfectly flat, without even a hillock. For this reason, the Castilian conquerors, who penetrated first from Coro to the banks of the Apuré, named the regions to which they came neither deserts, nor savannahs, nor meadows, but *plains—los Llanos.* Over an extent of thirty leagues square, you will often not meet with an eminence a foot high.

The resemblance to the sea which these immense plains bear, strikes the imagination the more forcibly in those places, often as extensive as half of France, where the surface is absolutely destitute of palms, or any species of trees, and where the distance is so great from the mountains, or the forests on the shores of the Orinoco, as to render neither visible. The uniform appearance which the Llanos exhibit, the extreme rarity of any habitations, the fatigues of a journey under a burning sun, and in an atmosphere perpetually clouded with dust, the prospect of a round girdle of an horizon, which appears constantly to recede before the traveller, the isolated stems of the palm-tree, all precisely of the same form, and which he despairs to reach, because he confounds them with other seemingly identical trunks which appear in the distant parts of the horizon: all these causes combine to make these steppes appear even more vast than they really are.

"Yet are their actual dimensions so prodigious that it is hard to outstrip them, even by the wildest flights of the imagination. The colonists, who inhabit the slopes of the mountains which form their extreme boundary on the west and north, see the steppes stretch away to the south and east, as far as the eye can reach, an interminable ocean of verdure. Well may they deem it boundless! They know that from the Delta of the Orinoco, crossing the province of Vannos, and from thence by the shores of the Meta, the Guaviare, and the Caguan, you may advance in the plains, at first from east to west, then from north-east to south-east, three hundred and eighty leagues—a distance as great as from Tombuctoo to the northern coast of Africa. They know, by the report of travellers, that the Pampas of Buenos Ayres—which are also Llanos, destitute of trees, covered with rich grass, filled with cattle and wild horses—are equally extensive. They imagine, according to the greater part of maps, that this huge continent has but one chain of mountains, the Andes, which forms its western boundary; and they form a vague idea of the boundless sea of verdure stretching the whole way from the foot of this gigantic wall of rock, from the Orinoco and the Apuré, to the Rio de la Plata and the Straits of Magellan. Imagination itself can hardly form an idea of the extent of these plains. The Llanos, from the Caqueta to the Apuré, and from thence to the Delta of the Orinoco, contain 17,000 square marine leagues—a space nearly equal to the area of France; that which stretches to the north and south is of nearly double the extent, or considerably larger than the surface of Germany; and the Pampas of Buenos Ayres, which extend from thence towards Cape Horn, are of such extent, that while one end is shaded by the palm-trees of the tropics, the other, equally flat, is charged with the snows of the antarctic circle."—Vol. vi. 52, 67.

These prodigious plains have been overspread with the horses and cattle of the Old World, which, originally introduced by the Spanish settlers, have strayed from the enclosures of their masters, and multiplied without end in the vast savannahs which nature had spread out for their reception.

"It is impossible," says Humboldt, "to form an exact enumeration of the cattle in the Pampas, or even to give an approximation to it, so immensely have they augmented during the three centuries which have elapsed since they were first introduced; but some idea of their number may be formed from the following facts, in regard to such portions of these vast herds as are capable of being counted. It is calculated that in the plains from the mouths of the Orinoco to the Lake Maracaybo there are 1,200,000 head of cattle, 180,000 horses, and 90,000 mules, which belong to individual pro-

prietors. In the Pampas of Buenos Ayres there are 12,000,000 cows and 3,000,000 horses belonging to private persons, besides the far greater multitude which are wild, and wander altogether beyond the reach of man. Considerable revenues are realised from the sale of the skins of these animals, for they are so common that the carcases are of scarcely any value. They are at pains only to look after the young of their herds, which are marked once a-year with the initial letter of the owner. Fourteen or fifteen thousand are marked by the greater proprietors every year, of which five or six thousand are annually sold."—Vol. vi. 97.

The enormous number of beasts of prey which multiply with this vast accumulation of animals to be devoured, as well those introduced by man as those furnished by the hand of nature, renders the life of many of the inhabitants of these regions little else than a constant struggle with wild animals. Many hairbreadth escapes and heroic adventures are recounted by the natives, which would pass for fabulous if not stated on such unquestionable authority as that of M. Humboldt, and supported by the concurring testimony of other travellers. The number of alligators, in particular, on the Orinoco, the Rio Apuré, and their tributary streams, is prodigious; and contests with them constitute a large portion of the legendary tales of the Indian and European settlers in the forest.

"The numerous wild animals," says Humboldt, "which inhabit the forests on the shores of the Orinoco, have made apertures for themselves in the wall of vegetation and foliage by which the woods are bounded, out of which they come forth to drink in the river. Tigers, tapirs, jaguars, boars, besides numberless lesser quadrupeds, issue out of these dark arches in the green wilderness, and cross the strip of sand which generally lies between it and the edge of the water, formed by the large space which is annually devastated and covered with shingle or mud, during the rise of the water in the rainy season. These singular scenes have always possessed a great attraction for me. The pleasure experienced was not merely that of a naturalist in the objects of his study; it belongs to all men who have been educated in the habits of civilisation. You find yourself in contact with a new world, with savage and unconquered Nature. Sometimes it is the jaguar, the beautiful panther of America, which issues from its dark retreat; at others the hosco, with its dark plumes and curved head, which traverses the *sauso*, as the band of yellow sand is called. Animals of the most various kinds and opposite descriptions succeed each other without intermission. 'Es como en el Paradiso,' (It is as in Paradise,) said our pilot, an old Indian of the Missions. In truth, everything here recalls that primitive world of which the traditions of all nations have preserved the recollection, the innocence, and happiness; but on observing the habits of the animals towards each other, it is evident that the Age of Gold has ceased for them as well as for the human race: they mutually fear and avoid each other; and in the lonely American forests, as elsewhere, long experience has taught all living beings that gentleness is rarely united to force."

"When the sands on the river-side are of considerable breadth, the *sauso* often stretches to a considerable distance from the water's edge. It is on

this intermediate space that you see the crocodiles, often to the number of eight or ten, stretched on the sand. Motionless, their huge jaws opened at right angles, they lie without giving any of those marks of affection which are observable in other animals which live in society. The troop separate when they leave the coast; they are probably composed of several females and one male. The former are much more numerous than the latter, from the number of males which are killed in fighting during the time of their amours. These monstrous reptiles have multiplied to such a degree, that there was hardly an instant during our voyage along the whole course of the river that we had not five or six in view. We measured one dead which was lying on the sand; it was sixteen feet nine inches long. Soon after, M. Bonpland found a dead male on the shore, measuring twenty-two feet three inches. Under every zone—in America as in Egypt—this animal attains the same dimensions. The Indians told us, that at San Fernando scarce a year passes without two or three grown up persons, usually women, who are drawing water from the river, being devoured by these carnivorous lizards.

"They related to us an interesting story of a young daughter of Urituen, who, by extraordinary intrepidity and presence of mind, succeeded in extricating herself from the very jaws of a crocodile. When she felt herself seized by the voracious animal in the water, she felt for its eyes, and thrust her fingers into them with such violence that she forced the animal to let go, but not before he had torn off the lower part of her left arm. The Indian girl, notwithstanding the enormous quantity of blood which she lost, succeeded in swimming to shore with the hand which was left, and escaped without further injury. In those desert regions, where man is constantly in strife with animate or inanimate nature, they daily speak of similar or corresponding means by which it is possible to escape from a tiger, a great boa, or a crocodile. Every one prepares himself against a danger which may any day befall him. 'I knew,' said the young girl calmly, when praised for her presence of mind, 'that the crocodile lets go his hold when you plunge your fingers in his eyes.' Long after my return to Europe, I learned that the negroes in the interior of Africa make use of the same method to escape from the alligators in the Niger. Who does not recollect with warm interest, that Isaaco the guide, in the last journey of the unfortunate Mungo Park, was seized twice near Boulinkombro, and that he escaped from the throat of the monster solely by thrusting his fingers into his two eyes?* The African Isaaco and the young American girl owed their safety to the same presence of mind, and the same combination of ideas."—Vol. vi. 203, 205.

If there is any one fact more than another demonstrated by the concurring testimony of travellers, historians, and statistical observers, in all ages and quarters of the world, it is, that the possession of *property in land* is the first step in social improvement, and the only effectual humaniser of Savage Man. Rousseau's famous paradox, "The first man who enclosed a field, and called it mine, is the author of all the social ills which followed," is not only false, but decidedly the reverse of the truth. He was the first and greatest benefactor of his species. Subsequent ills have arisen, not from following but forgetting his example; and

* PARK'S *Last Mission to Africa*, 1815, p. 89.

preferring to the simplicity of country life the seductions and vices of urban society. Humboldt adds his important testimony to the noble army of witnesses in all ages, and from all parts of the world, on this all-important subject.

"The Guamos are a race of Indians whom it is extremely difficult to fix down to the soil. Like other wandering savages, they are distinguished by their dirt, revengeful spirit, and fondness for wandering. The greater part of them live by fishing and the chase, in the plains often flooded by the Apuré, the Meta, and the Guaviare. The nature of those regions, their vast extent and entire want of any limit or distinguishing mark, seems to invite their inhabitants to a wandering life. On entering, again, the mountains which adjoin the cataracts of the Orinoco, you find among the Piroas, the Macos, and the Macquiritares, milder manners, a love of agriculture, and remarkable cleanliness in the interior of their cabins. On the ridges of mountains, amidst impenetrable forests, man is forced to fix himself, to clear and cultivate a corner of the earth. That culture demands little care, and is richly rewarded; while the life of a hunter is painful and difficult. The Guamos of the Mission of Santa Barbara are kind and hospitable; whenever we entered their cottages, they offered us dried fish and water."—Vol. vi. 219.

No spectacle in nature can exceed, few equal, the sublimity and magnificence of the scenery presented by the vast chain of mountains which, under the name of Cordilleras, Andes, and Rocky Mountains, traverses the whole continent of America, both north and south, in the neighbourhood of the Pacific Ocean. Of this prodigious pile of rocks and precipices, Humboldt, in another of his works, has given the following admirable account:—

"The immense chain of the Andes, traversing its whole extent near the Pacific Ocean, has stamped a character upon South American nature which belongs to no other country. The peculiarity which distinguishes the regions which belong to this immense chain, are the successive plateaux, like so many huge natural terraces, which rise one above another, before arriving at the great central chain, where the highest summits are to be found. Such is the elevation of some of these plains that they often exceed eight and nine, and sometimes reach that of twelve thousand feet above the level of the sea. The lowest of these plateaux is higher than the summit of the Pass of the Great St Bernard, the highest inhabited ground in Europe, which is 7545 feet above the level of the sea. But such is the benignity of the climate, that at these prodigious elevations, which even in the south of Europe are above the line of perpetual snow, are to be found cities and towns, corn-fields and orchards, and all the symptoms of rural felicity. The town of Quito itself, the capital of a province of the same name, is situated on a plateau, or elevated valley, in the centre of the Andes, nearly 9000 feet above the level of the sea. Yet there is found concentrated a numerous population, and the province contains cities with thirty, forty, and even fifty thousand inhabitants. After living some months on this elevated ground, you experience an extraordinary illusion. Finding yourself surrounded with pasture and corn-fields, flocks and herds, smiling orchards and golden harvests, the sheep and the llama, the fruits of Europe and those of America, you forget that you are as it were suspended between heaven and earth,

and elevated to a height exceeding that by which the European traveller makes his way from France into Italy, and double that of Ben Nevis, the highest mountain in Great Britain.

"The different gradations of vegetation, as might be expected in a country where the earth rises from the torrid zone by a few steep ascents to the regions of eternal congelation, exhibit one of the most remarkable features in this land of wonders. From the borders of the sea to the height of two thousand feet, are to be seen the magnificent palm-tree, the musa, the heleconia, the balsams of Tolu, the large flowering jasmin, the date-tree, and all the productions of tropical climates. On the arid and burning shores of the ocean, flourish in addition to these the cotton-tree, the mangolias, the cactus, the sugar-cane, and all the luscious fruits which ripen under the genial sun, and amidst the balmy breezes of the West India Islands. One only of these tropical children of nature, the *Carosylou Andicola*, is met with far in advance of the rest of its tribe, tossed by the winds at the height of seven and eight thousand feet above the sea, on the middle ridges of the Cordillera range. In this lower region, as nature exhibits the riches, so she has spread the pestilence, of tropical climates. The humidity of the atmosphere, and the damp heats which are nourished amidst its intricate thickets, produce violent fevers, which often prove extremely destructive, especially to European constitutions. But if the patient survives the first attack, the remedy is at hand; a journey to the temperate climate of the elevated plateau soon restores health; and the sufferer is as much revived by the gales of the Andes, as the Indian valetudinarian is by a return to Europe.

"Above the region of the palms commences the temperate zone. It is there that vegetation appears in its most delightful form, luxuriant without being rank, majestic yet not impervious; it combines all that nature has given of the grand, with all that the poets have figured of the beautiful. The bark-tree, which she has provided as the only effectual febrifuge in the deadly heats of the inferior region; the cyprus and melastoma, with their superb violet blossoms; gigantic fuchsias of every possible variety, and evergreen trees of lofty stature, covered with flowers, adorn that delightful zone. The turf is enamelled by never-fading flowers; mosses of dazzling beauty, fed by the frequent rains attracted by the mountains, cover the rocks; and the trembling branches of the mimosa, and others of the sensitive tribe, hang in graceful pendants over every declivity. Almost all the flowering shrubs which adorn our conservatories are to be found there in primeval beauty, and what to Europeans appears a gigantic scale; magnificent arums of many different kinds spread their ample snowy petals above the surrounding thickets; and innumerable creepers, adorned by splendid blossoms, mount even to the summit of the highest trees, and diffuse a perennial fragrance around.

"The oaks and trees of Europe are not found in those parts of the Andes which lie in the torrid zone, till you arrive at the height of five thousand feet above the sea. It is there you first begin to see the leaves fall in winter, and bud in spring, as in European climates; below that level the foliage is perpetual. Nowhere are the trees so large as in this region; not unfrequently they are found of the height of a hundred and eighty or two hundred feet; their stems are from eight to fifteen feet across at their base, and sometimes rise a hundred feet without a single cross branch. When so great an elevation as the plains of Quito, however, which is 9515 feet above the sea, is reached, they become less considerable, and not larger than those usually found in the forests of Europe. If the traveller ascends two thousand feet higher, to an elevation of eleven or twelve thousand feet, trees almost entirely disappear; but the frequent humidity nourishes a thick covering of arbutus and other evergreens, shrubs three or four feet high, covered with flowers generally of a bright yellow, which form a striking con-

trast to the dark evergreen foliage with which they are surrounded. Still higher, at the height of thirteen thousand feet, near the summit of the lower ranges of the Cordilleras, almost constant rains overspread the earth with a verdant and slippery coating of moss; amidst which a few stunted specimens of the melastoma still exhibit their purple blossoms. A broad zone succeeds, covered entirely with Alpine plants, which, as in the mountains of Switzerland, nestle in the crevices of rocks, or push their flowers, generally of yellow or dark blue, through the now frequent snow. Higher still, grass alone is to be met with, mixed with the grey moss which conducts the wearied traveller to the region of perpetual snow, which in those warm latitudes is general only at an elevation of fifteen thousand feet. Above that level no animated being is found, except the huge condor, the largest bird that exists, which there, amidst ice and clouds, has fixed its gloomy abode." —*Tableau de la Nature dans les Régions Equatoriales*, 59, 140–144.

In the rhythm of prose these are the colours of poetry; but it is of poetry chastened and directed by the observation of reality, and possessing the inimitable charm of being drawn from real life, and sharing the freshness and variety which characterise the works of nature, and distinguish them from the brightest conceptions of human fancy. As we have set out in this article with placing Humboldt at the head of modern travellers, and much above any that Great Britain has produced, and assigned as the main reason of this superiority the exclusive and limited range of objects on which the attention of our youth is fixed at our great universities, we shall, in justice to Oxford and Cambridge, present the reader with a specimen of the finest passages from Clarke and Bishop Heber, that he may judge for himself on their merit, great as it often is, when compared with that of the ardent and yet learned German.

Clarke, on leaving Greece, gives the following brilliant summary of the leading features of that classic land :—

"The last moments of this day were employed in taking once more a view of the superb scenery exhibited by the mountains Olympus and Ossa. They appeared upon this occasion in more than usual splendour; like one of those imaginary Alpine regions suggested by viewing a boundary of clouds when they terminate the horizon in a still evening, and are gathered into heaps, with many a towering top shining in fleecy whiteness. The great Olympian chain forms a line which is exactly opposite to Salonica; and even the chasm between Olympus and Ossa, constituting the defile of Tempe, is here visible. Directing the eye towards that chain, there is comprehended in one view the whole of Pieria and Bottiæis; and with the vivid impressions which remain after leaving the country, memory easily recalled into one mental picture the whole of Greece. Every reader may not duly comprehend what is meant by this; but every traveller who has beheld the scenes to which allusion is made, will readily admit its truth; he will be aware that, whenever his thoughts were directed to that country, the whole of it recurred to his imagination, as if he were actually indulged with a view of it.

"In such an imaginary flight he enters, for example, the defile of Tempe; and as the gorge opens to the south, he beholds all the Larissian plain. This conducts him to the fields of Pharsalia, whence he ascends the mountains south of Pharsalus; then, crossing the bleak and still more elevated region extending from these mountains towards Lamia, he views Mount Pindus far before him, and, descending into the plain of the Sperchius, passes the straits of Thermopylæ. Afterwards, ascending Mount Œta, he beholds opposite to him the snowy point of Lycorea, with the rest of Parnassus, and the villages and towns lying at its base: the whole plain of Elataia lying at his feet, with the course of the Cephisus to the sea. Passing to the summit of Parnassus, he looks down upon all the other mountains, plains, islands, and gulfs of Greece; but especially surveys the broad bosom of Cithæron, Helicon, and Hymettus. Thence, roaming into the depths and over all the heights of Eubœa and Peloponnesus, he has their inmost recesses again submitted to his contemplation. Next, resting upon Hymettus, he examines, even in the minutest detail, the whole of Attica, to the Sunian promontory; for he sees it all—and all the shores of Argos, Sicyon, Corinth, Megara, Eleusis, and Athens. Thus, although not in all the freshness of its living colours, yet in all its grandeur, doth GREECE actually present itself to the mind's eye—and may the impression never be obliterated! In the eve of bidding it farewell for ever, as the hope of visiting this delightful country constituted the earliest and warmest wish of his youth, the author found it to be some alleviation of his regret excited by a consciousness of his never returning, that he could thus summon to his recollection the scenes over which he had passed."—*Clarke's Travels*, vol. vii. p. 476-478.

So far Clarke—the accomplished and famed traveller of Cambridge. We now give a favourable specimen of Bishop Heber—his companion in traversing Russia—the celebrated author, in early life at Oxford, of *Palestine*, the amiable and upright Bishop of Calcutta, whose life, if ever that could be said of mortal, was literally spent in doing good. This accomplished and excellent prelate thus describes the first view of the Himalaya range and the summits of Nundidevi, one of the highest mountains in the world, nearly 5000 feet above the loftiest peak of Chimborazo.

"After coasting the lake for a mile, we ascended for thirteen more by a most steep and rugged road over the neck of Mount Gaughur, through a succession of glens, forests, and views of the most sublime and beautiful description. I never saw such prospects before, and had formed no adequate idea of such. My attention was completely strained, and my eyes filled with tears; everything around was so wild and magnificent that man appeared as nothing, and I felt myself as if climbing the steps of the altar of the great temple of God. The trees, as we advanced, were in a large proportion fir and cedar; but many were ilex; and to my surprise I still saw, even in these wild Alpine tracts, many venerable Peepul trees, on which the white monkeys were playing their gambols. Tigers used to be very common and mischievous; but since the English have begun to frequent the country, they have become very scarce. There are many wolves and bears, and some chamois, two of which passed near us. After wending up—

'A wild romantic chasm, that slanted
Down the steep hill athwart a cedar cover—
A savage place, as holy and enchanted
As e'er beneath the waning moon was haunted
By woman's wailing for her demon lover,'

we arrived at the gorge of the Pass, in an indent between the two principal summits of Mount Gaughur, near 8600 feet above the sea. And now the snowy mountains, which had been so long eclipsed, opened upon us in full magnificence. To describe a view of this kind is only lost labour: and I found it nearly as impossible to make a sketch of it. Nundidevi was immediately opposite, Kedarnath was not visible, but Marvo was visible as a distant peak. The eastern mountains, for whom I could procure no name, rose into great consequence, and were very glorious objects as we wound down the hill on the other side. The guides could only tell us they were a great way off, and on the borders of the Chinese empire. Nundidevi, the highest peak in the world, is 25,689 feet above the sea, 4000 higher than Chimborazo. Bhadinath and Kedarnath, which are merely summits of it, are 22,300 feet high. They are all in the British dominions."—*Heber's India*, vol. ii. p. 193-194, 209.

On comparing the descriptions of the most interesting objects in Europe and Asia—Greece and the Himalaya range—by these two distinguished British travellers, with the pictures given by Humboldt of the Andes, the falls of the Orinoco, the forests of the same river, and the expanse of the Pampas in South America, every one must admit the great superiority of the German's powers of painting nature. Neither Clarke nor Heber appear to attempt it. They tell you, indeed, that certain scenes were grand and beautiful, certain rocks wild, certain glens steep ; but they make no attempt to portray their features, or convey to the reader's mind the pictures which they tell you are for ever engraven on their own. This is a very great defect—so great indeed that it will probably prevent their works, how valuable soever as books of authority or reference, from ever acquiring lasting fame. It is a total mistake to say that it is in vain to attempt describing such scenes ; that is the same mistake as was formerly committed by pacific academical historians, who said it was useless to attempt painting a battle, for they were all like each other. How like they really are to each other has been shown by Colonel Napier, and many other modern historians. We question if even the sight of the rapids of the Orinoco would make so vivid an impression on the imagination, as Humboldt's inimitable description ; or a journey over the Pampas or the Andes, convey a clearer or more distinct idea

of their opposite features than what has been derived from his brilliant pencil. It is the same with all the other scenes in nature. Description, if done by a masterly hand, can, to an intelligent mind, convey as vivid an idea as reality. What is wanting is the enthusiasm which warms at the perception of the sublime and the beautiful, the poetic mind which seizes as by inspiration its characteristic features, and the pictorial eye which discerns the appearances they exhibit, and, by referring to images known to all, succeeds in causing them to be generally felt by the readers.

With all Humboldt's great and transcendent merits, he is a child of Adam, and therefore not without his faults. The principal of these is the want of arrangement. His travels are put together without any proper method; there is a great want of indexes and tables of contents; it is scarcely possible, except by looking over the whole, to find any passage you want. This is a fault which, in a person of his accurate and scientific mind, is very surprising, and the more inexcusable that it could so easily be remedied by mechanical industry, or the aid of compilers and index-makers. But akin to this is another fault of a more irremediable kind, as it originates in the varied excellences of the author, and the vast store of information on many different subjects which he brings to bear on the subject of his travels. He has so many topics of which he is master himself, that he forgets with how few, comparatively, his readers are familiar; he sees so many objects of inquiry—physical, moral, and political—in the countries which he visits, that he becomes insensible to the fact that, though each probably possesses a certain degree of interest to each reader, yet it is scarcely possible to find one to whom, as to himself, they are *all alike* the object of eager solicitude and anxious investigation. Hence, notwithstanding his attempt to detach his Personal Narrative from the learned works which contain the result of his scientific researches, he has by no means succeeded in effecting their separation. The ordinary reader, who has been fascinated by his glowing description of tropical scenery, or his graphic picture of savage manners, is, a few pages on, chilled by disquisitions on the height of the barometer, the disc of the sun, or the electricity of the atmosphere; while the scientific student,

who turns to his works for information on his favourite objects of study, deems them strangely interspersed with rhapsodies on glowing sunsets, silent forests, and sounding cataracts. It is scarcely possible to find a reader to whom all these objects are equally interesting ; and therefore it is scarcely to be expected that his travels, unrivalled as their genius and learning are, will ever be the object of general popularity.

In truth, here, as in all the other branches of human thought, it will be found that the rules of composition are the same, and that a certain *unity of design* is essential to general success or durable fame. If an author has many different and opposite subjects of interest in his head, which is not unfrequently the case with persons of the higher order of intellect, and he can descant on all with equal facility, or investigate all with equal eagerness, he will do well to recollect that the minds of his readers are not likely to be equally discursive, and that he is apt to destroy the influence or mar the effect of each, if he blends them together ; separation of works is the one thing needful there. A mathematical proposition, a passage of poetry, a page of history, are all admirable things in their way, and each may be part of a work destined to durable celebrity ; but what should we say to a composition which should present us, page about, with a theorem of Euclid, a scene from Shakspeare, and a section from Gibbon ? Unity of effect, identity of train of thought, similarity of ideas, are as necessary in a book of travels as in an epic poem, a tragedy, or a painting. There is no such thing as one set of rules for the fine arts, and another for works of thought or reflection. The *Iliad* is constructed on the same principles as the *Principia* of Newton, or the history of Thucydides.

What makes ordinary books of travels so uninteresting, and, in general, so shortlived, is the want of any idea of composition, or unity of effect, in the minds of their authors. Men and women seem to think that there is nothing more necessary to do to make a book of travels, than to give a transcript of their journals, in which everything is put down, of *whatever* importance, provided only it really occurred. Scenes and adventures, broken wheels and rugged rocks, cataracts and omelets, lakes and damp beds, thunderstorms and waiters,

are huddled together, without any other thread of connection than the accidental and fortuitous one of their having successively come under the notice of the traveller. What should we say to any other work composed on the same principle? What if Milton, after the speech of Satan in *Paradise Lost*, were to treat us to an account of his last dinner; or Shakspeare, after the scene of the tomb in Juliet, were to tell us of the damp sheets in which he slept last night; or Gibbon, after working up the enthusiasm of his readers by the account of the storming of Constantinople by the Crusaders, was to favour us with a digression on the insolence of the postilions in Roumelia? All the world would see the folly of this; and yet this is precisely what is constantly done by travellers, and tolerated by the public, because it is founded on nature. Founded on nature! Is everything that is actually true, or real, fit to be recorded or worthy of being recounted? Sketches from nature are admirable things, and are the only foundation for correct and lasting pictures; but no man would think of interposing a gallery of paintings with chalk drawings or studies of trees. Correctness, fidelity, truth, are the only secure bases of eminence in all the arts of imitation; but the light of genius, the skilful arrangement, the principles of composition, the selection of topics, are as necessary in the writer of travels as in the landscape painter, the historian, or the epic poet.

THE BRITISH SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE

[BLACKWOOD'S MAGAZINE, August 1836]

Of all the fine arts, architecture is the one which appears most likely to attain great and deserved eminence in these regions. We have no need of imagination to figure to ourselves what, in time to come, this noble art may become in this northern clime. We have only to look at the cathedrals and monasteries which, in stately magnificence or ruined splendour, overspread the land, to be satisfied that greatness is here within the reach of our people; that it is suited to their taste, their habits, and their disposition; and that neither its cloudy sky nor frigid atmosphere have been able to chill the flights of great and original genius in this department. In the other fine arts we appear to be struggling against the stream. Painting languidly contends with the *vis inertiæ* in its professors, arising from the experienced inability of purchasers, generally speaking, to distinguish a good work from an indifferent one. Sculpture, notwithstanding the wealth which has been lavished, and the talent which has been turned to that direction, has never yet attained to an equality with the great works of Grecian or Italian art; but architecture, in some departments, is unrivalled in the British isles. An Englishman feels mortified as he leads a foreigner of taste through the vast accumulation of conceit and absurdity which characterises the monuments of Westminster Abbey, and which so seriously weakens the effect of its noble aisles; he looks in vain for a gallery of British artists to satisfy an eye accustomed to the works of Claude or Carracci. But he points with exultation to the pinnacles of Lincoln, the dome of St Paul's, and prophesies, that when in the revolutions of

ages all the other structures of these times shall have been swept away—when the desolation of Nineveh shall be renewed on the site of Paris, and a vast accumulation of mounds alone indicate the mighty expanse of London,—even then Waterloo bridge will still span with undecaying solidity the floods of the Thames; and the solitary savage will pause as he beholds through the openings of the forest the stately towers of York Cathedral.

As architecture is the only one of the fine arts which seems congenial to the taste of our people, and in which the revolution of ages has produced works worthy of immortal endurance, the future cultivation of it becomes an object of the highest interest and importance. It is obvious that the final reputation of every nation depends as much, perhaps more, on the structures which they have reared as on the writings they have produced, or the conquests they have gained. If we examine with attention the nations which are sanctified in our recollections by a halo of imperishable lustre, we shall find that nothing has impressed our imaginations so strongly as the great and durable edifices which they have constructed, and which still rear their hoary heads through the obscurity of time, as if to emulate the eternity of nature, and defy the tendency to decay which she has in general impressed on all the works of man. We read in the Bible, and are familiar from our childhood with the Assyrians and Babylonians; but even the veneration inspired by that holy record is increased when we behold the mighty structures they have reared still standing on the plain of Shinar—when, from the summit of the green mounds on the Tigris, we trace the vast circumference of the walls of Nineveh, and in the gigantic pile of the Birs-Nimrod, with its summit scathed by fire, and torrents furrowing its sides, we behold the imperishable remains of the Tower of Babel. Egypt is regarded by all nations as the common mother of knowledge and civilisation; but great as the blessings have been which she communicated to man, they would have been forgotten in the revolutions of ages, and its rich plains have become as obscure as those of the Quorra or the Congo, did not the stately remains of Luxor yet exist in undecaying beauty amidst the sands of the desert, and the pyramids still stand "erect and unshaken above the floods of the Nile." Ex-

quisite as are the poems, admirable the historians, profound the philosophers of ancient Greece, it is not from them alone that the indelible charm of Athens is derived. The grace of the Parthenon, the Pillars of Jupiter Olympius, impress our imaginations as strongly as the eloquence of Demosthenes or the pathos of Euripides; and when the travelled scholar goes back in imagination to the classic shores which he has visited, he thinks less of the land of Miltiades or Plato than of the white columns of Sunium glittering in the morning sun, or the golden light of evening shedding its lovely tints on the pillars of the Acropolis. Rome itself, the mistress of the world, and whose dominion extended from the Wall of Antoninus to the foot of Mount Atlas, from the shores of the Euphrates to the Atlantic Ocean, owes much of the magic of its name to the noble remains of its architectural splendour; and the traveller, as he passes under the Amphitheatre of Titus, ceases to wonder at the saying of the pilgrims—"While the Colosseum stands, Rome shall stand; while Rome stands, the world shall stand."

It is the same with modern times. Ask the American traveller what it is which impressed him most with the land of his fathers when he first approached it from the Atlantic Ocean, and he will answer that it is neither its harbours nor its scenery, its rivers nor its mountains, its lakes nor its cataracts, which produced an indelible impression on his mind. All these his own Transatlantic wilds could equal or excel. It is its cathedrals and monastic remains which captivated his imagination; it is their stately piles, rising amidst the green meadows or shady woods with which they are surrounded, which gave a peculiar and undefined charm to English scenery, and carried him back in imagination to the Edwards and the Henrys, and the Catholic times and the age of chivalry, and gave to inanimate stone all the charm of historical lore. Let any one who has visited all that is beautiful and interesting which it contains, whether in urban magnificence or rural beauty, consider what objects are engraven on his memory in the brightest colours, and have taken their place in secret cells, never to be disturbed while life endures. He will find it is her castles and her cathedrals—her abbeys and monasteries. He will think of Fountains Abbey, raising its light and airy arches from the

green and closely-shaven turf of the little valley in which it stands; and its magnificent trees almost equalling the elevation even of its lofty aisles. He will think of Tintern casting a holy air over the secluded shades of the Wye, and picture in imagination the gorgeous festoons of ivy hanging over its mouldering windows, and the leafy screen which shrouds from profane gaze the exquisite details of its tracery. He will call to mind Rivaulx Abbey, rising in solemn majesty in its lovely vale; and the last rays of the evening sun projecting its graceful arches against the dark overhanging wood of Duncombe Park. He will think of Conway still, as in the days of Edward, with its massive round towers and picturesque walls surmounting the captive streams of Wales; and Warwick yet standing in undecayed strength, the fit abode of the "knocker-down and putter-up of kings." He will think of the red towers of Bothwell, surmounting the green masses of foliage which surround their base, and the close-shaven turf which descends in rapid slope to the Clyde, and the dark-brown caverns of that classic stream at its foot; or of Castle Campbell, erect though mouldering in gray and dreary solitude, amidst the hanging forests and sounding cataracts of Caledonia; or of Kenilworth, encircled by the green meadows and stately oaks of Warwickshire, rich in ivy, and architectural decoration, and storied association. Durham will rise up to his recollection with its gorgeous towers in the middle distance, the ancient pile of the bishop's palace in the foreground, and hanging woods in the background; or Gloucester, with the light and fairy open work of its minarets projected in the glow of an evening sky. London itself, with all its greatness, its riches, and its recollections, yields to the magic of architectural magnificence; and when the mind reverts to it at a distance, and when not distracted by particular objects of pursuit, it thinks neither of its theatres nor its opera, its parks nor its squares, its fashion nor its genius,—but of the gray and massy piles which surmount or bestride the Thames—of its granite bridges and forest of spires—of Westminster Abbey closing the scene at one extremity, and the vast dome of St Paul's towering above clouds and smoke like a giant at the other.

Turn to the Continent. Every traveller knows the unbounded, the incalculable effect of the architectural riches

with which it is stored. In truth, the impression arising from its great edifices is so powerful, it is so indelibly associated with the recollection of the places and states in which they are to be found, that it is altogether impossible to separate them. Do we hear of Venice? We instantly think of the gay and beautiful buildings which surround the Place of St Mark, and the laughing crowds which loiter on its flagged pavement, and the Eastern barbaric magnificence of the church at its one extremity, and the chastened riches of architectural decoration on the three other sides. We think of the granite columns at the entrance of the Piazetta, and the triple-storied pillars which adorn the fronts of the palaces to the great canal, and the gorgeous magnificence of the sun setting over the harbour and the church of St Georgio-Maggiore and the Redentore from the gardens of St Dominique. Do we hear of Milan? Instantly the picture of its exquisite cathedral rushes into the mind; and we see, with all the clearness of actual vision, its snow-white pinnacles, and thousands of glittering statues, rising in gay profusion into the clear blue sky of Italy. Genoa is mentioned:—We picture to ourselves the varied splendour of the view from the Lantern; and the piles of palaces, domes, and battlements which are clustered on its slopes, and the blue sea at its foot, and the castellated heights above, and the overwhelming grandeur of the Strada Balbi. Naples:—A beautiful bay arises in the mind, surrounded by precipitous mountains clad with vines and olives, dotted by churches, furrowed by torrents. Long lines of white palaces of stately elevation, with flat roofs, are seen; domes rise at intervals to break the outline; castles run far into the sea; fortresses overhang the dazzling piles; dark masses of pine and green intervals of foliage are seen among the architectural monuments.

Even the recollection of the greatest capitals and most interesting historic scenes of Europe is mainly formed from the impressions of their architectural splendour. The severe simplicity of the Brandenburg Gate, the noble palace, and the imposing elevation of the Academy of Arts at Berlin, reward the traveller for the wearisome monotony of the sands of Prussia. The gigantic grandeur of the monuments of St Petersburg, the stupendous portico of the church of

Cazan, the lofty pillar of Alexander, the granite quays, the rich decorations of the Admiralty and imperial palaces, the streets of columns, and long lines of pillared scenery on either bank of the Neva, befit a capital which aspires to govern half of the world. Even the great name of Napoleon owes half its lustre to the truly imperial splendour of his architectural conceptions; and not only his popularity with his subjects, but his fame among strangers, rest as much now on the monuments of Paris as the conquests of his armies. The chaste simplicity of the Bourse, the lovely pillars of the Madeleine, the stupendous grandeur of the arch of Neuilly, the magnificence of the pillar in the Place Vendome, have done as much for his fame as the triumph of Austerlitz, the victory of Jena, or the conquest of Tilsit.

Rome itself, the mistress of the world, the seat of empire alike in arts and in arms, the first in genius, greatness, and fame, is overshadowed in our recollection by the overwhelming grandeur of St Peter's; and while its palaces and its temples, its ruins and churches, its galleries and statues, are fading under the lapse of time, its stately dome, the matchless splendour of its interior decoration, survive in our recollection in imperishable lustre, and derive fresh brightness from the length of time in which they have been treasured in the stores of memory.

Examples of this sort may show the greatness and capabilities of which this noble art is susceptible, and the extraordinary degree to which it influences the character of a nation in future ages, and the estimate in which it is held by future generations of mankind. From various causes it is fitted to produce a greater and more durable impression on mankind than either poetry, painting, or sculpture. No one can have seen the exquisite peristyle of the Madeleine, the marbled magnificence of the interior of St Peter's, or the majestic arch of Neuilly, without feeling the truth of this observation. Architecture has one immense advantage over all the other rival arts—it is more durable. Edifices of stone or marble endure for ages; if unassailed by the fury of man, they will survive thousands of years. There is something in this feeling of durability and permanence which adds inexpressibly to their effect, and gives to ancient

monuments a storied interest which belongs to none of the other works of art. What perfection of execution in any other work of human genius can rival the impression produced by the majestic monuments of Carnac and Luxor, still standing in undecayed beauty amidst the wreck of surrounding nations—the same in this hour as when they beheld the armies of Sesostris issue from the hundred gates of Thebes, three thousand five hundred years ago? With what feelings of awe do we approach the temples of Pæstum, hoary and emaciated with age; which were old when Rome was young, and witnessed the adoration of their worshippers, when the Capitol was still a desert cliff, and wild beasts formed their dens in the caves of the Palatine! The Colosseum, with all its matchless grandeur, owes much of its solemnity to the long endurance of its gigantic walls. We recollect that they have witnessed the stately march of the Roman soldiery, and beheld the triumphs of the legions; that they have resounded with the revels of the emperors, and been sanctified by the heroism of the martyrs; that they have survived the long night of the Middle Ages, and excited the veneration of the pilgrims, who flocked for a thousand years to the capital of the Faithful. In such cases, it is not a mere monument of art which we admire; it is a relic of former ages which we venerate, a remnant of the pristine world which we contemplate; and its time-worn walls are fraught with innumerable associations, and all the undying interest of historical recollection.

It is to this cause that much of the extraordinary interest of a great capital, if built of imperishable materials, and adorned by the monuments of successive ages, is owing. A great historic gallery rises before us: we see at the same instant the works of successive ages: a glance takes in at once the labour of a thousand years. The changes of manners, the revolutions of opinion, the fleeting objects of national desire, the varying flow of national fortunes, the triumphs of one age, the disasters of another; the struggles of freedom, the submission of slavery; the fervour of piety, the neglect of infidelity; the sway of superstition, the selfishness of corruption, all arise in durable and visible array. Each fleeting change has imprinted its character on some lasting monument: and they all stand in grim

array, like a gallery of the dead before us, as if to testify at once the greatness, the nothingness, the corruption, and the immortality of man. Embark on that skiff which will send you forth like an arrow into the middle of the Thames. Those Gothic towers which rise above the flood cover the bones of the Confessor and Alfred; the Henrys and the Richards of ancient times repose beneath its pavement: the antique pile which adjoins it was the dining hall of Stephen. The majestic dome which towers above every other structure was the contemporary of Marlborough; a spire in the distance arises from the church, and covers the graves of the Templars; the massy arches which bestride the flood were erected amidst the fervour of gratitude to Wellington.

What are those gay and glittering piles which rise under a brighter sun, and into a clearer atmosphere, on the banks of a smaller river? Yonder dark and heavy towers arose amidst the austerity of Gothic taste, and were loaded with the riches of Catholic superstition; they have witnessed the march of the Crusaders and the coronation of Henry IV.: that gilded dome attests the magnificence of Louis XIV., and covers the bones of Turenne: projecting into the stream is the ancient Tour du Nesle, the theatre of licentious tragedy; that beauteous row of columns conceals the windows from whence the massacre of St Bartholomew was ordered; that red obelisk marks the spot where Louis and Marie Antoinette, and Danton and Robespierre, were executed; that perfect peristyle was begun by Napoleon for the Temple of Glory; that majestic arch in the distance was erected to the honour of the Grand Army. Ascend the Tower of the Capitol, and survey the mingled wreck of ages by which you are surrounded. You stand on the massy battlements which defied the arms of Brennus: the Roman senate-house, the palace of the Cæsars, are at your feet: that vast circular tomb on the banks of the Tiber contains the ashes of Adrian: yonder stupendous dome, which rises like a mountain in the west, covers the bones of St Paul; it was reared by the genius of Michael Angelo, and adorned by the pencil of Raphael: the sculptured pillars, which surmount all modern edifices in their vicinity, were erected to the honour of Trajan and Antoninus, the greatest and

best of the emperors: that massy pile which still survives, like the skeleton of a world, the ruin of all its contemporary structures, was reared by the captive hands of the Jews: under those arches the triumph of Aurelian, the captive Zenobia have passed. It is this wondrous and overwhelming concentration of historical interest into one focus, this presenting of it in actual objects to the senses, which constitutes the grand, the unequalled charm of architecture, and gives to genius, in that department, a lasting hold of the admiration of mankind, which the sister arts will seek in vain to attain.

We have prefaced our remarks on British architecture with these observations, which must be familiar to every person of historical information and travelled acquirement, in order to explain the grounds on which we object to the present state of the art amongst us. That we have genius in abundance; that the national taste is strongly running in this direction; that we have wealth to overflowing, and a people who derive sensible pleasure from architectural decoration, is obvious. If any one doubts this, let him drive from Hyde Park Corner, up Regent Street, and round Regent Park, and if he is candid he will confess, not only that Europe has not such a suite of architectural splendour to exhibit, but that even imagination can hardly outstrip the gorgeous magnificence of the spectacle. But if, after this cursory survey, we examine more in detail the structures which have passed in review, there will be much less room for national exultation. This magnificent array of pillared scenery is almost all composed of the most perishable materials: in half a century, if not renewed, it will all be levelled with the dust: to preserve its freshness and beauty requires a triennial expenditure on each front, of nearly a hundred pounds. The *tout ensemble*, as you advance, is rich and varied; but if the details of each separate edifice are examined, it will be found that many of them are in the most grotesque and barbarous taste: that, in the vain attempt to improve upon or vary the ancient orders, architectural monsters of the most shocking description have been produced; and that not one building is to be seen in the long array which a century hence will exist, or convey to future ages the magnificence of the reign of

the last of the Georges. This is a melancholy consideration. Architecture is not, like the art of the upholsterer, conversant only with perishable materials; its structures are not framed of silk and damask, of wood and worsted, like curtains, tables, and carpets. It aims, or should aim, at perpetuity; and its highest object is to rear those durable monuments which, surviving the fleeting changes of fashion, opinion, prosperity, or caprice, are destined to perpetuate, in a visible form, to future ages, the magnificence or grandeur of the present. What have we done within the last half century to accomplish this object? what durable monuments has London, the capital of half the world, constructed, during the period of its greatest splendour, to impress mankind a thousand years hence? Has any of our monarchs found it of brick and left it of marble? Excepting the majestic bridges over the river, and perhaps the Duke of York's pillar, is there one edifice which has been constructed in the age which struck down Napoleon which will be in existence five hundred years hence? And with these exceptions, may not future generations say of this age of magnificence, as Burke did of the British sway in India, that it has left no more permanent monuments of its power than the rhinoceros or the tiger?

It is no excuse for this monstrous fragility of modern edifices to say that stone is expensive in London; that its cost precludes it from being used except in public structures; and that it is unjust to reproach people with a defect imposed upon their metropolis by the deficiencies of nature. Brick, so far from being the most perishable, is in truth the most durable of materials: witness the bricks in the Birs-Nimrod, still preserving the arrow-headed characters as entire as when they were impressed upon them at the time when the waters of the Flood had only recently dried up upon the earth. Let any one look at one of the bricks from Babylon or Nineveh in the public museums, and he will at once be convinced of the endurance of which that substance, when rightly formed, is capable. In truth, so far from being rejected as a perishable, brick was selected by the ancients as the most lasting of all substances: Plutarch says, that when rightly hardened, and built in proper perpendicular, it will survive the finest stone,

and in fact stand for ever. Certain it is, that the brick walls in the baths of Caracalla, the baths of Titus, and the Thermæ of Dioclesian, have withstood the decay of time and the fire of the Goths better than either the stone of the Colosseum, or the marble of the Forum of Trajan; and these imposing ruins demonstrate of what grandeur a brick building, even when constructed with little regard to ornament, but on a sufficiently great and majestic plan, is susceptible.

Besides, is London *so very poor* that it cannot afford, in this its highest period of grandeur and opulence, to bring granite or freestone or marble from its provincial quarries? Where did the Romans get the granite and marble with which they have constructed the enduring monuments of the Eternal City? Was it in the Campagna of Rome, or the mountains of Tivoli? Did not the marble come from Greece, and the granite from Upper Egypt or the quarries of Atlas? Enter the church of St Paul's beyond the walls; its three hundred and eighty columns of veined and variegated granite were all brought from the recesses of Mauritania; from places so remote that they have eluded the inquisitive eyes of modern travellers. The verde antique, which was brought in such quantities to Rome that its fragments may be picked up like common stones on any of the Seven Hills, all came from quarries not far from the cataracts of the Nile, which have been only recently discovered by enterprising travellers. It was from these costly and far distant sources that the Romans drew the materials wherewith to construct their glorious capital; and is London, which sways regions of the East unknown to the eagles of the emperors—London, which concentrates within itself the commerce of the world—not able to purchase stone from the mountains of Britain to perpetuate its architectural magnificence? Does not the Thames bring water carriage to the very heart of the metropolis? Within three miles of the sea, is not the finest freestone to be found on the shores of the Firth of Forth, and granite equal to the hardest Egyptian on the shores of Aberdeen? Porphyry is to be had in abundance at Peterhead; marble of all colours in the Western Isles. With such materials and such wealth, the ancients would ere this have made London the noblest city

in Christendom, and constructed monuments which a thousand years hence would attract travellers, as do those of the Eternal City, from all parts of the civilised world. Let us not deceive ourselves—it is neither wealth nor materials which we want, but the grandeur of conception which can direct wealth to worthy objects; and the patient industry, the enduring fortitude which, setting its high resolve upon great things, can undergo the toil, and patiently await the time requisite for their development.

Everything now is frittered away to produce an *immediate* impression; the certain sign that nothing of *lasting* excellence will be created. Such is the frivolous and ephemeral temper of the times, that neither individuals nor public bodies have patience to wait for the lapse of the period indispensable to produce any work of durable merit; something brilliant must be produced, and that too right speedily, or the artist's reputation is at an end. Our architects must answer the demands of the public, and *work to time*, or they are speedily consigned to the garret. Mushroom rows of buildings, with brilliant stuccoed and meretricious fronts, are run up as rapidly as an order for Manchester goods is executed; the artist seems as much afraid as his employers that, if the *season* is allowed to pass by, the taste for his production will be at an end. Hence the monstrous insufficiency and gaudy character of many of the most ornamental new streets, and even public edifices, in London: and hence the insane attempt, so painfully conspicuous, to vary and improve upon the Grecian orders; an attempt which will succeed when mathematicians succeed in improving upon the forms of the triangle, the circle, and the ellipse—but not till then. All this is useless, and worse than useless. It habituates the public to a meretricious and unchaste style of building, totally inconsistent with permanent merit; and wastes vast riches on the ephemeral brilliancy of a few years, which, if applied to edifices of a simpler and more durable character, would both form the public taste, and produce works worthy of immortal endurance.

The lamentable thing is, that it was not thus in former times; and that this deplorable insufficiency and haste of building has arisen, for the first time in our history, at that very stage of our national progress when a more manly style

might have been anticipated; at that period of national growth when Augustus found Rome of brick and left it of marble. Our ancestors did not produce, indeed, long rows of pillared edifices—whited sepulchres, with a thin coating of stucco, concealing a charnel-house of brick—but they constructed works which will stand for centuries, and attract the admiration of men till time has levelled them with the dust. Witness the stately cathedrals, the work of ages, which arose in every See of Britain, all formed of durable materials, and of such extraordinary beauty that subsequent generations have been unable to equal, far less excel them. Witness the noble castles, whose ruins are still to be seen in the green fields of merry England, and whose massy battlements, after braving the storms of six hundred years, look down with contempt on the successive generations of mushroom buildings which arise and fall at their feet. It was not thus when the towering genius of Sir Christopher Wren raised the majestic dome of St Paul's—a structure which, if it had possessed the portico which he designed for it, would have been the most sublime edifice, so far as external form goes, that the piety of man had ever erected to the honour of his Creator. It was not thus when that beautiful church was raised, then in the obscurity of alleys, which now, in Trafalgar Square, puts to shame all the ephemeral plaster work with which it is surrounded; or when the genius of the Freemasons, in the days of Henry VII., produced the unrivalled grace of his sepulchral chapel. What! are we to be seriously told that stone is so expensive that it is beyond the reach of the national resources, even for public edifices intended to stand for centuries, when it was brought in abundance into every corner of England in the days of our Henrys and our Edwards to construct the cathedrals, and when, amidst the poverty and distraction of the Plantagenet reigns, the monks of Canterbury imported it from Normandy to construct the beautiful edifice which still covers the tomb of the Black Prince? Can the nation which could borrow a thousand millions to strike down Napoleon not emulate the works of monks and abbots in an age when England only contained two millions of inhabitants, and the national revenue was only £200,000 a-year? We repeat it—it is not wealth which we want: the wealth

which is annually squandered in London on carriages, dogs, and horses, would speedily make it the noblest city in the universe. It is the taste to give it a right direction; the enduring spirit which can submit to present sacrifice for the sake of future excellence; the greatness of soul which, disdaining the fleeting or ephemeral luxuries which wealth can command, fixes its aspirations on those works of a lasting character which stamp immortality upon the age in which they arose.

We often speak of the French as a gay and volatile race, incapable of steadily pursuing any object for any length of time together; fickle in their passions, fickler still in their attachments, and totally unworthy to enter the list with the sober steadfast march of the English people. Will France, however, or England, stand highest two hundred years hence, from the monuments of the age of Napoleon and Wellington which they have left? Future generations will then, as now, look with undiminished interest on the splendid monuments of Paris. The majestic arch of Neuilly, the imposing portico of the Pantheon, the lovely peristyle of the Madeleine, the chaste simplicity of the Bourse, the noble pillar of Austerlitz, will attract, as now, crowds from every corner of the world to the centre of modern architectural beauty. What will London have to show to stand in comparison? What will the conquering nation have to exhibit to rival the trophies of the vanquished? Where will our descendants, two hundred years hence, find the monument voted to Trafalgar; where the tribute of a nation's gratitude to the heroes of Waterloo? Every one of the brilliant piles from Hyde Park Corner to the Colosseum, which now attract our passing admiration, will be levelled with the dust, or stand in grim and black desolation, like the streets of Vicenza, after all the plaster and ornamental work has fallen down. The wave of fashion will have rolled in another direction; the expense of keeping up the present fronts will be felt as intolerable, and Regent Street and the Park, if they exist at all, will be a frightful ghastly monument of an ephemeral age.

We are not insensible to the beauty of many of the modern edifices of London: the Post-office, St Pancras in the Fields, Marylebone Church, and above all, the arches at

Hyde Park Corner ; but they are not for a moment to be put in comparison with the structures reared during the same period at Paris or St Petersburg. When we approach the portico of the church of Cazan at the latter metropolis, the sublime statue of the Czar Peter standing on its granite pedestal, weighing eighteen hundred tons, or the noble pillar to Alexander, we feel as if, coming from London, we had passed from the works of pigmies to those of giants. Every thing in the English capital is neat, elegant, and sumptuous ; the plaster fronts are delicately moulded ; they are in general clean, and washed with a warm tint ; sculpture adorns the pediments ; columns and statues are to be seen in abundance. But all is on a Lilliputian scale in point of magnitude, and ephemeral in point of endurance ; nothing indicates a people whose taste is grand and elevated either in their public or private structures. Everything in the Russian metropolis bespeaks solidity, permanence, and majesty. Granite paves the streets, granite composes the columns, nations appear to have been employed in the construction of monuments calculated for eternal endurance. English travellers long turned into ridicule the slow progress, under the Bourbon princes, of the public monuments commenced by Napoleon ; year after year the workmen were to be seen chipping at the capitals, or polishing the columns. Regent Street, during their slow growth, rose up at once in complete lustre, and the English began to flatter themselves that their capital was about to become the most beautiful in Europe. Now, however, the works are done ! after thirty years' labour the scaffolding is removed, the workmen have disappeared, and while the plaster fronts of the English structures are already beginning to decay, or show in gaping fissures but too clearly the perishable nature of their materials, the Parisian monuments stand forth pure and brilliant in their first youth, destined to captivate mankind for hundreds of years.

To these general observations on the ephemeral or perishable nature of the English monuments, an exception must be made in the case of those structures which are for purposes of acknowledged *utility*, as our bridges, docks, aqueducts, canals, and roads. Unquestionably, the age which has produced London and Waterloo Bridges, the Manches-

ter Railway, the Caledonian Canal, the Thames Tunnel, the Menai Bridge, Pont Cysilte Aqueducts, and the West India Docks, need not fear a comparison with the public works of the same description of any other people. Grandeur of conception, durability of materials, respect for futurity, characterise all these undertakings. But it is from the very grandeur of these *useful* works, and the comparatively trifling nature of all destined to mere ornament, that we augur worst of the spirit of the age in this particular. It is evident that we want neither wealth to execute, nor genius to conceive, great works worthy of our reputation in other respects. It is the mania for *what is to produce a return* which paralyses all our efforts. We have become a mere race of utilitarians, or, what is worse, of selfish and grasping men. Nothing is undertaken on a scale worthy either of the age or of posterity, unless it promises a good dividend. We are, in truth, a nation of shopkeepers. The impatience of the democratic, the selfishness of the mercantile spirit, have got possession not only of the national councils, but the public taste. The love for the great, the future, and the excellent, has been superseded by the passion for the useful, the present, the brilliant. Profit is all in all. We have sadly degenerated from our ancestors. Our ornamental structures no longer resemble the stately castles and cathedrals of former times ; but rather the towers, drawbridges, and palaces which were painted on the canvass tents of the nobility in the Polish diets, which cast a fleeting lustre over the scenes of those stormy assemblages, and when they were dispersed vanished for ever!

Mercantile habits are far from being inconsistent with the enduring and elevated spirit which produces the grand and the beautiful in the fine arts ; witness the matchless glories of the Acropolis, the imposing streets of Genoa, the marble palaces of Venice, the perfection of architecture at Florence, the venerable piles of Ghent. On the contrary, when rightly directed, they are the best foundation for excellence in these departments ; because they provide the wealth necessary for their construction, and at the same time induce that liberality of mind, and custom of large expenditure on great objects, which are essential to success in all the higher walks of human genius. England, till within

these few years, has been guided by an aristocracy combining the most eminent in rank, wealth, and talent; and their sway, if no longer paramount in the legislature, is at least still predominant in all the educated classes of the people. How, then, has it happened that a nation pre-eminent in the aristocratic turn of its habits and inclinations, and once so remarkable for the grandeur and sublimity of its public structures, should now be so deplorably superficial in its ideas in these respects, and openly proclaim itself incapable of undertaking any work which is to take five years in building? We profess ourselves unable to account for such a degradation, if it is not to be found in that parsimonious and shortsighted spirit which, for twenty years, has been increasing with the growth of popular influence amongst us, and at last produced the great convulsion of 1832. During all this time, Government was disabled from undertaking any great or durable works, (with the exception of Windsor Castle, which was defrayed from that "Godsend," the repayment of the Austrian loan,) by the incessant clamour of the popular party against unnecessary expenditure, and the growing jealousy of the people at any works of magnificence on the part of their rulers. Strange to say, the popular party, during all that period, not only took no interest in national structures erected by Government, but rather felt an antipathy to them. They considered them as a culpable display of luxury on the part of a bankrupt establishment, and grudged every shilling laid out on works which were not peculiar to the Sovereign, but the common patrimony of the nation. Hence the long peace which followed the capture of Paris has been a complete blank as to any great or worthy architectural monument on the part of Government. But it is Government in the later stages of society which can alone originate all great edifices, and, by the love for the durable and majestic thus created, influence the taste of the nation, and determine the character of private structures, or of voluntary associations of individuals. With us the master-spirit has been awanting, the key-note has not been struck; and hence the insulated efforts of individuals have wasted themselves on perishable or unworthy structures, and the national taste, in an age of wealth, luxury, and refinement, has taken an entirely wrong direction.

Democratic societies are occasionally capable of rearing the most admirable monuments ; but in all such cases, it will be found that, though in form a republic, the supreme power has in reality been lodged in a single individual or a few persons, whose talents, eloquence, or popular arts have given them undisputed authority. The republic of Athens erected the matchless peristyle of the Parthenon, the imposing gateway of the Propyleum ; but it was at a period when the talents of Pericles had given him, for a long course of years, an unresisted authority, and when the influence of Athens was able to turn to the embellishment of their city the common treasures of Greece at Delphi. Hence his well-known saying to one of the Grecian demagogues, who complained of the expenditure, that if the people of Athens grudged the cost of the edifices, let them inscribe them with his name, and he would defray it himself. Mercantile wealth has often, as in Tyre, Carthage, and the modern Italian or Flemish cities, been the parent of architectural splendour, but in all such cases it was a proud and high-minded aristocracy who were the real rulers of the state, and practically intrusted with the direction of the affairs. A genuine democracy is at once shortsighted and selfish, stingy and rapacious ; parsimonious to all other parties or objects, avaricious and rapacious for its own advantages, or the fortunes of its favourite leaders ; and such a spirit is the precise reverse of the disposition required for architectural greatness, which of all other things requires most the elevated views, grandeur of conception, and durability of design, which belong to bodies whose interests and habits are detached from the shifting quicksands of popular administration, and fixed on the permanent character of aristocratic government. America, while she continues republican, will never produce any edifices worthy of being put in comparison with the cathedrals, castles, monuments, and palaces of the old world. Hence the astonishment and admiration of its ingenuous citizens at the majestic edifices of that description in modern Europe. France produced none during the days of her republican frenzy ; the magnificence of Paris is all to be referred to the reigns of Louis XIV. and Napoleon. During the Convention and the Directory enormous fortunes were made by the civil and military employés of the Repub-

lican Government, but nothing great or durable in the arts or public structures was attempted by the public rulers. They had plenty of fêtes, spectacles, and banners, but not one structure of lasting magnificence or utility set on foot :* and like them the Reform mobs in Great Britain four years ago overspread the land with banners, processions, and tricolor flags ; but have not yet reared one monument higher than the foundation stone, in honour of Maxima Charta, or the Father of the Reform Bill.

The unfortunate circumstance of stone or marble not being found in the neighbourhood of London has undoubtedly had a most prejudicial effect, not only on the durability, but on the character of its architectural edifices. If the freestone quarries of Craigleith, near Edinburgh, had existed at Highgate or Hampstead, not only would the metropolis have been constructed of lasting materials, but their solidity and cost would have stamped a character of simplicity and grandeur upon its architecture, which constitute the only foundations of real excellence. It is impossible to construct long rows of whited sepulchres with stone : the meretricious and overloaded ornament of modern London would have effectually vanished with the mere use of a hard material for building. There is no end to stucco friezes or statues : it is easy to cast capitals, according to " Mr Nash's *positive order,*" in a mould, and whitewash them to resemble freestone ; but it is not so easy a matter to play these antic tricks with solid masonry, or run the risk of destroying a sumptuous edifice by the ridiculous attempt to effect innovations in the Grecian orders. If the National Gallery in Trafalgar Square had been constructed of stone, it would never have exhibited the pepper boxes and vitiated taste which makes all Englishmen blush who recollect the Louvre or the Vatican. Had Buckingham House been built, as it should have been, of freestone or marble, it would never have exhibited that overloaded ornament and unbecoming proportion which, notwithstanding much beauty of detail, render it no fit palace for the kings of England.

We are far from wishing to encourage the vanity which provincials in general, and the citizens of Edinburgh in

* The Pantheon, though disgraced by the bones of Marat, was both begun and finished by the Bourbon dynasty.

particular, are so apt to exhibit; but we must say, that the effect of its admirable freestone is most conspicuous in the purer taste and more manly character of building in the Scottish metropolis; and that two hundred years hence, not only many more, but more perfect monuments of this age will be found within its walls, than in the vast circumference of London. Where will then be the long rows of pillared scenery which now adorn Regent Street, Hyde Park, the Strand, and Regent Park? Reduced to its stone edifices, how much will London have to exhibit? Even then, however, the simpler, less ornamented, and humbler edifices of Edinburgh will be flourishing in undiminished beauty; and all the acquisitions of subsequent ages will be mingled with the structures of the present, to exhibit a united mass of architectural splendour. It is an easy matter for the citizens of London, revelling in their superior wealth and in the possession of the seat of government, to deride the fourteen columns, the fragment of a mighty undertaking, on the Calton Hill. Those fourteen columns, formed on the purest and chastest model, are the same benefit to the arts and public taste which the poems of Virgil or Homer are to literature; they will exist, if not destroyed by external violence, for thousands of years, and be admired when the meretricious piles of London are reduced to heaps of their mother clay. Even now, they are the most imposing objects of the kind in Britain; they impress strangers more than any modern edifice in the island; and if the structure is completed, by the munificence of donations or bequests, on the same scale of primeval magnificence, it will give to the Scottish metropolis a distinction beyond what any capital in Europe can boast.

Much of the sublimity of this unfinished structure, as of its far-famed original on the Acropolis of Athens, is to be ascribed to the great blocks of stone of which it is composed. Those who have seen the gate of Agamemnon at Mycenæ, in Greece, or the Cyclopian walls of Volterra, in Italy, will be at no loss to appreciate the immense effect of such massive blocks in the production of architectural effect. It compensates in a degree which, *a priori*, could scarcely be credited, the deficiency of height or magnitude. Stonehenge, rising like the work of giants on the solitude of

Salisbury Plain, impresses the mind with a feeling of awe beyond any edifice in Britain : the monolithe obelisks and gateways of Luxor exceed in sublimity the tenfold bulk of York cathedral. This important element of effect is totally lost in stuccoed buildings ; and not only is it lost, but the public taste, habituated to the overloaded ornament and varied style of which plastic work is susceptible, becomes insensible to the severe simplicity and imposing grandeur of earlier art.

The destruction of both houses of Parliament by fire has now afforded an opportunity of reconstructing those venerable halls on a scale suited to the riches and magnificence of the age, and in a style derived from our ancestors, adapted to the Gothic origin and time-worn buttresses of our constitution. Here, then, is an opportunity of redeeming the age from the obloquy to which it has become exposed from the gaudy attire and ephemeral character of its metropolitan edifices, and erecting at least one structure worthy of being placed beside the noble monuments of St Petersburg and Paris, in the architectural race of the nineteenth century. Let us hope that the precious opportunity will not be lost of erecting an edifice *entirely of stone*, fire-proof, and worthy of being the palace of the constitution which its authors boast of as having effected so great an improvement on the old English government. Even democratic jealousy will hardly envy the grandeur of the reformed House of Commons ; democratic stinginess will not grudge what is laid out on the sovereign palace of the people. Now, then, is the time to adopt a truly princely view of the subject ; to erect a work on such a scale of durability as may defy alike the war of elements, the decay of time, and the madness of the people ; and by rearing one simple and majestic edifice in the metropolis, gradually wean the public taste from that flimsy and overloaded style which has arisen in this country from accidental causes before the natural period of the corruption of taste, and promises, if not checked, to deprive future ages of all the legacies which they should receive from the wealth, the power, and the genius of the present.

SISMONDI

[BLACKWOOD'S MAGAZINE, May 1845]

Never was there a juster observation than that, in ordinary times, in the same state, genius moves in a circle; originality is lost amidst imitation; we breathe thought not less than vital air. This is more especially the case in all those branches of opinion or philosophy which relate to internal economy, or the social concerns of men. There, it is not merely abstract principle or disinterested reasoning which have struck their roots into the human mind; interest, prejudice, passion, have moved it yet more deeply, and rendered the change from one set of opinions to another still more difficult. Universally it will be found, that in regard to the social concerns of men, which are so closely interwoven with our habits, interests, and affections, the transition from error to truth can rarely be accomplished by any intellect, how powerful soever, which has not imbibed, in part at least, the maxims of foreign states. New ideas, like lightning, are produced by the blending of two streams of thought, wafted from different ages or parts of the world. The French political revolution was brought about by the meeting of new-born French fervour with long-established English ideas: the Anglomania which immediately preceded that convulsion is the proof of it. The English social revolution has proceeded from the same cause; it is the junction of British practical habits with French speculative views which has produced the political economy of modern times; and the whole doctrines of free trade which Adam Smith matured, and recent times have reduced to practice, are to

Etudes des Sciences Sociales. Par J. C. Simonde de Sismondi. 3 Vols. Paris: 1837.

be found in the *Physiocratie* of Dupont de Nemours, and the political pamphlets of Turgot.

It was in the year 1775 that these doctrines, imported from France, were first broached in this country by the publication of the *Wealth of Nations;* and it took half a century for them to pass from the solitary meditation of the recluse to the cabinets of statesmen and the hustings of the populace. Now, however, this transformation of thought is general, at least in a considerable part of the mercantile and manufacturing portions of the community. Few in the great cities of the empire think of doubting the doctrines of free trade; fewer still, if they doubt them, venture to give publicity to their opinions. The reason of this general concurrence among commercial men, and of this—in social matters—rapid conversion of general thought, is to be found in the circumstance, that the new opinions fell in with the interests, or at least the immediate interests, of the leaders and influential men among the mercantile classes. The remainder, not understanding the subject, yielded by degrees to what they were told, by their superiors in wealth and intelligence, were incontrovertible propositions. Manufacturers who enjoyed the advantages of coal, ironstone, canals, railroads, and harbours at their doors, very readily embraced the doctrine that all restrictions on commercial intercourse were contrary to reason; and that all mankind, how destitute soever of these advantages themselves, could do nothing so wise as to admit all their goods without any protective duties whatever. Merchants widely engaged in mercantile speculations, who were buying and selling in all parts of the world, and whose interest it was to purchase as largely and as cheaply as possible, and to sell as extensively and as dearly as was consistent with that extent, had no difficulty in arriving at the conclusion that commerce should be left perfectly free, that all duties for the protection of native industry should be abolished, and that the only charges on the importation of goods should be the cost of transit and their own profits. Every shilling taken from the import duties was so much put in their pockets, either directly by their gaining the remitted duty, or by their indirectly feeling the benefit of it in the reduction of price and the widening of the market. Capitalists and bankers,

who had vast sums to lend, found nothing so reasonable as that they should be permitted, without restraint, to exact any amount of usury they chose from the necessities, the folly, or the cupidity of their debtors. The opinion became general, that a nation could only be made rich by the same means as an individual manufacturer, and that the excess of money obtained for the produce of national labour above the cost of production, or the price paid, was the measure of national wealth.

Under the influence of these opinions, prohibitions, restrictions, and import duties gave way on all sides. To the huge mass of the ignorant vulgar, the very sound of "*abolition of restrictions*" was delightful. Restraint was what they hated, exclusive privilege was their abomination, liberty of thought and action their supposed elysium. To abolish monopolies, incorporations, crafts, guildries, and statutes of apprenticeship, seemed a mighty step in the emancipation of the human race. Thus they cordially and universally joined in the cry for liberation from every sort of restriction, alike in thought, commerce, industry, and action, which had been first raised by the philosophers, and afterwards generally embraced by the capitalists and merchants. Amidst a chorus of congratulations, mutual applauses, and sanguine anticipations, with the cordial approbation of the political economists, the general concurrence of the merchants, and the loud shouts of the multitude, the doctrines of free trade were progressively applied to every part of the social body. Taxes upon imports have been diminished, till, on all save a few articles, they are now entirely removed; native industry has been exposed, with a very slender protection, to the competition of foreign states; the restraints on the exportation of machinery have been removed, to allow foreign nations every advantage in competing with us; punishment has been alleviated, till the penalty of death, save in cases of wilful murder, has become practically abolished. The liberty of the press has been pushed the length of allowing without control its utmost licentiousness; unbounded toleration permitted in matters of opinion, even so far as generally to proclaim impunity to the worst Chartist or Socialist doctrines; combinations among workmen to raise their wages declared legal, and carried into practice on the

greatest scale in all the manufacturing districts; a great organic change introduced into the constitution, to render Government more thoroughly dependent on public opinion. Taxes to the amount of above thirty millions sterling, on articles of consumption, have been repealed in less than thirty years; a vast monetary change, to lower prices by raising the value of money, has been introduced, and steadily enforced, in spite of unbounded consequent distress; and the principle of free competition introduced generally as the basis of the social union, the only sure guarantee of national prosperity.

"Experience," says Dr Johnson, "is the great test of truth, and is perpetually contradicting the theories of men." Never, since the beginning of the world, had the doctrines of philosophers been so generally embraced by Government, or measures really intended for the public good so extensively carried into effect by the Legislature. Unbounded were the anticipations of prosperity and happiness in which men generally indulged on the adoption of this system; inflexible has been the steadiness with which it has been adhered to, amidst an amount of suffering which would long ago have proved fatal to any set of measures among men, except those dictated by their own opinions. But amidst all these anticipations, and this steadiness in carrying out the doctrines of free trade in every department of thought and action, various unpleasant indications soon began to manifest themselves in every part of society; and it became evident to all that the fruits of the tree of knowledge were not, in this generation at least, destined to be different from what they had proved to our First Parents. While wealth was increasing to an unparalleled extent among the commercial classes, suffering and distress as generally ensued among the rural inhabitants; and the multitude of ruined fortunes among them rendered it certain, that at no distant period the old race of landed proprietors would, with the exception of a few magnates, be all rooted out, and their place supplied by a new set of purchasers from the commercial towns. While population was advancing with unparalleled strides in the manufacturing districts, pauperism even more than kept pace with it in all; and the extraordinary fact has now been revealed by statistical researches, that, in an age of unparalleled wealth and general and long-continued

peace, a *seventh* part of the whole inhabitants of the British islands are in a state of destitution, or painfully supported by legal relief.*

While all attempts even to pay off the national debt have been abandoned by Government, and the principle is openly proclaimed by the Prime Minister, that any surplus of revenue above expenditure must, to relieve the necessities of the country, be applied to the reduction of taxation, without a thought to the reduction of the debt; the Home Secretary has announced the not less alarming fact, that, since the peace, above two hundred millions sterling, or a fourth of the national debt, has been raised for the relief of the poor in England alone. While the returns of the income-tax have demonstrated that a hundred and fifty thousand persons in Great Britain possess among them an annual revenue of two hundred millions a-year, or above £1200 each on an average, the melancholy fact has been revealed, by the result of attempts to increase the national revenue by means of indirect taxation, that that source of income can no longer be relied on; and in a time of profound, and at the close of a period of long-continued peace, it has become indispensable to recur to an assessment on property and to direct taxation, as it was in Rome in the decaying periods of the empire. The blue folios of the Houses of Parliament teem with authentic and decisive evidence of the vast increase, during the last thirty years, of crime and frequent destitution among the working classes in all parts of the empire. Every four or five years a brief feverish period of gambling, extravagance, and commercial prosperity, is succeeded by a long and dreary season of anxiety, distress, and depression; frightful strikes among the workmen, attended with boundless distress among, and hideous democratic tyranny over them, invariably succeed in the close of those periods of suffering, as pestilence stalks in the rear of famine; and popular insurrection has become

* Viz. :—

In Ireland, ...	2,300,000
„ England, ...	1,500,000
„ Scotland, ...	200,000
	4,000,000

Just a seventh of the whole inhabitants, who are now about 28,000,000.

so common, that it is a rare thing to see two years pass over without martial law being of necessity practically enforced in some parts of the empire. Efforts unheard of have been made to extend the religious establishments of the state, or augment the means of moral and intellectual instruction among the people—but hitherto with no perceptible effect in checking the habits of sensuality, improvidence, and intemperance, which prevail amongst them; and in an age and a country abounding, beyond any other that ever existed, with declamations in favour of the blessings of knowledge, and the elements of happiness and moral improvement, which free trade and a general liberation from restraint were to procure for society, the scandal has been exhibited of serious crime having, during the last forty years, increased TEN TIMES as fast as the number of the people.*

We are so accustomed in this country to those things, that they have ceased to make any impression upon us. The great majority of men actively engaged in the business of life pay no attention to them whatever, but go on labouring to make money, or keep themselves afloat in the world, without bestowing even a passing thought of whither that world on which they are so intent is tending. Philosophers and political economists, confounded at beholding such results flowing from the adoption and practical application of their favourite principles, quietly pass by on the other side; and, without denying the facts, content themselves with disregarding them altogether, and continuing to prophesy, amidst general disaster, unbounded national prosperity and moral elevation from the ultimate effect of the further abolition of restraint on thought and action. The religious portion of the community—and they form a large and highly respectable body—consider these alarming

* Committals for serious crime, in—

	England.	Scotland.	Ireland.	Total.	Population of Great Britain and Ireland.
1805,.....	4,605	89	3,600	8,284	15,800,000
1819,.....	14,254	1,380	13,251	28,885	20,600,000
1842,.....	31,369	3,884	21,352	56,605	27,300,000

—PORTER'S *Parl. Tables and Prog. of the Nation*, iii. 172, 227.

From this table it appears that from 1805 to 1842 the population of the empire has advanced from 158 to 273—that is, increased about 70 *per cent*; while serious crime has increased from 8 to 56—that is, 700 per cent. Crime, therefore, has augmented ten times as fast as the number of the people.

symptoms as the judgment of Heaven upon us for our sins, and the natural and well-deserved consequence of our neglect of the means of salvation, which have been so mercifully put into our hands. The merchants and manufacturers, who are sometimes rapidly making fortunes under the new system, maintain that it is founded on pure and tried reason, and that in no other way can the national resources be fully developed. The landowners, who are as rapidly losing them, are, in part, so paralysed by their individual embarrassments, in part so perplexed with the intricacy of the subject, that they are incapable of making any efforts, except on particular occasions, in their own defence, but resign themselves quietly to the stroke of fate, as the Moslem does to the bowstring of the Sultan. The working classes are quiet during the brief periods of prosperity; but nourish in their hearts at all times a profound jealousy and hatred of the moneyed interest. The opinion is almost universally diffused among them, that the gains of their employers are scandalously great, and wrung out of their heart's blood—that they and their masters are naturally at war with each other—and that whatever is gained by the one is lost by the other. Meanwhile Government, obeying the new, and, as matters stand, irresistible impulse let in upon the monarchy by the Reform Bill, quietly, and without any attempt at consistency, slide into the principles and measures dictated to them by the dominant, most active, and most influential class in the state; and, shutting their eyes to the consequences in future times, content themselves with getting through the present with as much practical support and as little obloquy as possible.

But although this is, generally speaking, the state of opinion on all social questions in the British islands, it may well be imagined that they are looked upon with very different eyes by men of intelligence out of the whirl of passing events, and beyond the reach of the passions or interests which mislead so many in this country. The civilisation of Great Britain; the social questions at issue amongst us; the experiment making, on so extended a scale, of the effect of the new doctrines on the happiness of the people in the British islands; the prodigious wealth which has been accumulated in this country in a few hands of late years; the

magnitude and long duration of our political power; and the celebrity in arts, in arms, and in literature we have long enjoyed, have struck all surrounding nations with astonishment, which, so far from diminishing, is hourly on the increase. This effect appears variously, according to the temper and previous prepossessions of those among whom it has taken place. In the French, our ancient rivals, our persevering antagonists in the revolutionary war, it has produced no other effect, generally speaking, but envy, hatred, and malice. In the Americans, it has engendered a mingled feeling of respect, admiration, and jealousy, which appears in the strenuous efforts they are making to augment their wealth, power, and territory, by every possible means, and in every possible direction. But in reflecting minds on the Continent, on the really great in all countries, it has produced the effect of deep reflection and anxious investigation. They have already begun to contemplate the astonishing and long-continued empire of Great Britain as we, and all subsequent ages, have so long done the corresponding and parallel dominion reared by the arms of the Roman legions. In the causes of the greatness, and seeds of ruin, in both, there is a striking, and to us portentous, resemblance. The analogy has been already traced by more than one masterhand on the Continent. But none was better qualified to do justice to the subject, or has treated it in a more luminous or philosophic spirit, than SISMONDI; and it is to his observations on the present social state of the British empire that we have now to direct our readers' attention.

As the views of this great philosopher and historian are almost entirely at variance with those which now generally prevail amongst us, and to which the Liberal party in every part of the country have in an especial manner pinned their faith, and as they at the same time seem to be deserving of very great attention from their novelty and importance, and direct bearing on the dearest interests of the society with which we are surrounded—we hasten to premise that, in forming them, Sismondi has at least not been blinded by any *political* partiality for the side to which, in *social* questions, he inclines. He is, as all persons acquainted with foreign literature well know, a decided Liberal, indeed republican, in his political opinions. Born and educated in

the democratic canton of Geneva, a Protestant both by birth and connexion, the decided opponent of tyranny in all its forms, of Romish domination in all its guises, he first matured his powerful mind in writing the history of the Italian republics, and afterwards had his opinions confirmed by tracing the long annals of the French monarchy. The brilliant episodes in the history of the former, contrasted with the hideous catalogue of persecutions and crimes which stain the latter, have confirmed in his mind—to a degree which, considering the extent of his information and candour of his thoughts, appears surprising—the original prepossessions he had imbibed in favour of republican institutions. He even carries this so far as to advocate in his Essays, which form the immediate subject of this paper, an elective in preference to a hereditary monarchy. He is as ardent an enthusiast in the cause of civil and religious liberty as Russell or Sidney, though his views are modified as to time, by observation and experience. He yields to none of the optimist school of more recent times in sanguine expectations of the benefits which may be expected from training the people to the duties of self-government, and ultimately intrusting them with its powers. He is adverse to a hereditary aristocracy, and strongly advocates the division of landed property, by adopting in all countries the law of equal succession, which has given its powers their deathblow both in France and America. His life has been spent in painting the bright efflorescence of freedom and genius in the modern Italian republics, and their long blight under the combined powers of feudal tyranny and Romish superstition in the French monarchy. The perfection of society, in his estimation, would be an aggregate of little republics, like those of Greece or southern Italy in ancient, or of Holland, Florence, Pisa, or Genoa, in modern times—in which supreme power was vested in the hands of magistrates, named by the heads of trades, who had been themselves elected by the general suffrage of their respective bodies. Many readers will probably be surprised at finding such political opinions entertained by a man of such acquirements, and class it with the numerous instances which history affords, of the inability of the greatest minds entirely to throw off the sway of early impressions and hereditary prepossessions. But we are not

concerned, in this place, with Sismondi's political opinions; it is his views on social questions that appear peculiarly important, and which we are desirous of making known to our readers. And we mention his political opinions in order to show, that he at least cannot be accused of a prejudice in favour of the monarchical or aristocratic side of the question.

It is from a leaning to and sympathy with the opposite class in society, that his strong and important views on the tendency of social change in Europe, and especially in Great Britain and France, are directed. He is decidedly of opinion that this tendency is, to the last degree, disastrous; that it is it which is the cause of the continued depression of industry, degradation of character, and increase of depravity and crime, among the people; and that so great and alarming are these causes of evil, that, unless they are arrested by a change of opinion among the influential classes of society, or the good providence of God, they will infallibly destroy the whole fabric of European civilisation, as they did that of the ancient world. They are, in his own opinion, the more alarming, that they have sprung, not from the blighting, but from the triumph, of what we call civilisation: not from the retention of men in ignorance, but from their advance in knowledge; not from the upholding of restraint, but from its removal. All these, the former evils with which mankind had to contend, will, in his opinion, yield to the growth of industry and the progress of knowledge; but in their stead a new set of evils—more serious, more widespread, more irremediable—will rise up, which, to all appearance, must in the end destroy all the states of modern Europe. England and France he considers, and probably with reason, as the states most likely to be the first victims of those social evils, far more serious and irremediable than any of the political which attract so much attention, and are the objects of such vehement contention between the parties into which society is divided. England and France are not alone exposed to the danger; all the other European states are advancing in the same career, and are threatened, in the end, with the same calamities. England and France have been the first to be reached and are now most endangered by them, only because they are in advance of

the others in the career of knowledge, freedom, and civilisation, and have attained more rapidly than their neighbours the power and energy by which modern society is distinguished, and the perils by which it is menaced. In the social evils, therefore, with which Great Britain is now environed, he sees the precursor of those which are certainly, at one period or another, to afflict all Europe ; and in the overthrow of our empire, from the corroding effect of the calamities they will induce, the ultimate destiny of all the states of modern times.

That these views are melancholy, all will admit ; that they are new, at least in this country, will be conceded by the best informed. They come, however, recommended to us, not merely by the powerful arguments and copious facts by which they are supported, but by the peculiar turn of mind and varied qualifications of the author by whom they are brought forward. We have long been of opinion, that it is the separation of political economy from history which is the chief cause of the numerous errors into which, since the days of Adam Smith, its professors have been betrayed, and the general discredit into which the science itself has fallen with a large portion of the thinking men in the community. This effect has taken place, as it was very natural it should in the infancy of a science, from the habit into which philosophers and men of abstract thought were led of reasoning on human affairs as if they were the movement of inanimate bodies, and considering only their own arguments, not the illustration of their truth or falsehood which experience has afforded. This habit is peculiarly conspicuous in the advocates of free trade, the reciprocity system, and Mr Malthus's doctrines on pauperism and the poor-laws. They rest on abstract arguments, and are perfectly indifferent to the refutation of their principles which every day's experience is affording. Probably the whole present generation of political economists must go to their graves before this general error is eradicated from the human mind. It is an error, however, of the most fatal kind, and one which, while it is persevered in, must render political economy one of the greatest of the many curses which the eating of the fruit of the tree of knowledge has let loose upon mankind. It is like a system of medicine, formed, as such systems are in

every age, not on experience or observation, but on the theories of certain physicians on the structure of the human body, and the proper way of developing its various functions. Many a patient in every age has been killed, before the absurdity of such theories has been put down by the experience and common-sense of mankind. And many a nation, in Sismondi's opinion, will perish before the nostrums of its state physicians have been expelled from the general opinion of man.

It is his profound and varied historical information, which has given Sismondi his deep distrust of nearly all the conclusions of modern political economy, and inspired him with the gloomy presentiments with which he is filled, in regard to the tendency of society under the practical application of its principles. He has fixed his eyes, not on abstract principles, but on actual issues, and traced the result, not of theoretical views on the best regulations for society, but of such as have really been established, and had their tendency tested by the experience of centuries in different ages and countries of the world. He sees with dismay, in the state of society in modern Europe, under the combined influence of free trade, increasing knowledge, popular institutions, vast wealth, and long-established civilisation, a mere repetition, under different names, of those dreadful social evils which corroded the Roman empire, and in the end overturned the vast physical dominion of the legions. He sees in that state of rural society which is nearly extinct in the British islands, and fast wearing out in France, Belgium, and other parts of Europe, where civilisation is most advanced, the only solid foundation for general happiness, the only durable bulwark of public morality, the only permanent security for national existence. This state of society is disappearing, and a new condition of men coming on, from causes which seem beyond the power of human control, but the fatal effect of which is as apparent as the sun at noonday. And thence the gloomy views with which he is inspired on the future prospects of Europe, and his profound hostility to the principles of political economy, from which he considers them as having mainly arisen.

Political economy, as a science, dates its origin, by the common consent of men, from the famous work "On the

Nature and Causes of the *Wealth* of Nations." But a greater authority than Adam Smith has told us, that "he that HASTENETH TO BE RICH SHALL NOT BE INNOCENT." Sismondi's doctrines on political economy are a commentary on these words, applied to the management of nations and the social concerns of man. It is in the fatal thirst for wealth, and the application of all the powers of knowledge, and all the resources of art, to *that single object*, that he sees the all-powerful cause, alike of the present degradation of so many of the working classes, of the false direction of political philosophy, and of the spread of social evils, which will, to all appearance, in the end prove fatal to the existence of the British empire, and of all the European communities. But it is not any general or vague declamation on the progress of corruption, and the growing evils of society, which he has brought forward ; he has given a close and cogent chain of reasoning, supported by a formidable array of historical facts, and shown how it is that the evils have arisen—how they bear upon the condition of the great bulk of the people, how they degrade their character, lower their habits, corrupt their morals, and destroy their happiness; and how irremediable, under the prevailing ideas of the influential classes in society, these evils have become. The social injustice and political delusions which, history has now clearly ascertained, were the causes of the ruin of the Roman empire, he sees reappearing amidst us under different names, but in still more aggravated forms, and with more hopeless influences on society. All this he traces mainly to the ruinous pursuit of wealth, which has seized alike upon our philosophers, our statesmen, and our practical men ; which has too fatally verified the saying of Scripture, that "the love of money is the root of all evil ;" and converted the noble science of political economy, the end of which is "ut homines feliciter vivant," into the degrading handmaid of wealth.

So strongly is he impressed with this idea, and so convinced of the ruinous direction which the social sciences are taking, under the combined influence of philosophic error and moneyed ambition, that he thinks it indispensable that language should mark the lasting and indelible crisis of distinction between the philosophy of general happiness and

the means by which national wealth may be augmented. The first he calls "Economie Politique," or "Les Sciences Sociales;" the last "*Chrematistique*," or the art of accumulating riches in a state.* It is in the conversion of political economy, or the science of making men happy, which of course can only be done by rendering them orderly, moral, and religious, into Chrematistique, or the mere pursuit of the means by which we may augment the sum of national riches, that the unobserved source of by far the greatest social evils of the present day is to be found. These evils are greater than either the slavery of the Romans or the bondage of serfs in modern times; for they have induced the ruinous effects of both these degrading systems, without the alleviating and counteracting advantages with which either was attended. And the way in which this effect flows from the social doctrine of modern times is this:—

An augmentation of production is generally considered as an addition to national wealth; and it is on this ground that all nations, under the guidance of the *Chrematists*, are making such strenuous efforts to increase their agricultural and manufactured produce. Such an augmentation, however, says Sismondi, is not only by no means in every case an addition to national wealth, but it is often a useless and pernicious addition to national suffering. If the supply of any article exceeds what can be consumed in the early and simple ages of society, or disposed of to advantage in the later, it is not only no advantage, but a positive loss. What avails it that the yards of cotton cloth manufactured, or the quarters of wheat raised, are increased in a country from 50,000,000 to 100,000,000, if, in consequence of the increased supply, the price is lowered one-half? The producers get their trouble for their pains—they gain nothing—the consumers get more than they require—great part of the superfluity is wasted or sent abroad at a ruinous loss. Augmentation of production, therefore, is not in every case a sign of increased national wealth; it is the *maintenance of a due proportion between production and consumption* which is the real desideratum, and forms the only real basis of lasting national opulence.

* From χρημα—"money, riches."

According to the *Chrematists*, the wealth of a nation, as of an individual producer, is to be measured by the excess of the value of production, or the price obtained for it, over its cost. This, says Sismondi, is the most fatal of all errors, and the grand source of the misery of the working classes, and instability of society, in all the manufacturing states of Europe. It is true the wealth of a *master-manufacturer* is to be measured by the excess of the price he obtains for his produce over the cost of its production; but a master-manufacturer is not a nation. A nation consists not only of masters, but of workmen; not only of consumers, but of producers. The latter class is by far the most numerous, the most important, the most likely to increase. If they are reduced to misery in consequence of the reduction of their wages by the introduction of machinery, the employment of juvenile or female labour, the immigration of foreign labourers, or any other cause, it is a poor compensation to say, that the profits of their employers have been greatly augmented at their expense. If the excess of the value of production above its cost were either the measure, or even an important element in national wealth, Ireland, where the wages of field labour are sixpence a-day, and Poland, where they are threepence, should be the richest nations in the world, whereas they are notoriously the poorest. The real measure of national wealth is to be found, not in the excess of production above the consumption employed in it, but in the means of comfortable livelihood which their industry affords to the *whole* classes of the community; and that is only to be attained where wealth is very generally distributed.

The mere increase of national wealth is far from being, in every instance, an addition either to national strength, national security, or national happiness. On the contrary, it is often the greatest possible diminution to the whole three. It is not the increase of wealth, but *its distribution*, which is the great thing to be desired. It is on this that the welfare and happiness of society depend. When wealth, whether in capital or revenue, runs into a few hands—when landed property accumulates in the persons of a knot of territorial magnates, and commerce centres in the warehouses of a limited number of merchant princes, and manufactures

in the workshops of a small body of colossal companies or individual master-employers, it is *absolutely certain* that the great bulk of the people will be in a state of degradation and distress. The reason is, that these huge fortunes have been made by diminishing the cost of production—that is, the wages of labour—to such an extent, as to have enormously and unjustly increased the profits of the stock employed in conducting it. Society, in such circumstances, is in the unstable equilibrium: it rests on the colossal wealth, territorial or commercial, of a few; but it has no hold on the affections or interests of the great majority of the community. It is liable to be overturned by the first shock of adverse fortune. Any serious external disaster, any considerable internal suffering, may at once overturn the whole fabric of society, and expose the wealth of the magnates only as a tempting plunder to the cupidity and recklessness of the destitute classes of society. "There is as much true philosophy as poetry," says Sismondi, "in the well-known lines of Goldsmith,—

> 'Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,
> Where wealth accumulates and men decay!
> Princes and lords may flourish or may fade—
> A breath may make them as a breath has made;
> But a bold peasantry, their country's pride,
> When once destroy'd, can never be supplied.'"

The *Chrematists* always represent an increase of national wealth as necessarily flowing from an augmentation of the riches of the individuals who compose it. But this is the greatest possible mistake. Great part of the riches obtained by individuals in a state, so far from being an addition to the national wealth, is an abstraction from it. The reason is, that it is made *at the expense of others in the same community;* it is a transference of riches from one hand to another, not an addition to their total amount. Every one sees that the gains of the gamester, the opera-dancer, the lawyer, are of this description; what they take is taken from others in the same community. But the magnitude of the gains of merchants and manufacturers blinds the world to the real nature of their profits, which, in great part at least, are made at the expense of others in the state. If the importing merchant makes extravagant profits, he indeed is enriched; but how is he enriched?

In part, at least, he is so, by impoverishing such of his countrymen as purchase his goods at the exorbitant price which constitute his profits. If the exporting merchant or manufacturer drives a gainful trade, it is in part, without doubt, derived from the industry of foreign nations to whom the export goods are sold; but it is too often earned at the expense also of the workmen he employs, who have been compelled by competition, or destitution, to sell their labour to him at a rate barely sufficient for the support of existence. We are not to flatter ourselves that the nation is becoming rich, because the exporters of Irish grain, Paisley shawls, or Manchester cotton goods, are making fortunes, when the labourers they employ are earning from sixpence to eightpence a-day only. On the contrary, the magnitude of the gains of the former is too often only a measure of the destitution and degradation of the latter.

It is usually considered that it is a sufficient answer to this to observe, that if riches are thus, from the direction which national industry has taken, drawn to a distressing extent from one class of the community to concentrate them in another, a corresponding benefit is conferred upon other classes, by the increased expenditure which takes place on the part of those in whose hands the wealth has accumulated. There can be no doubt that a certain compensation does take place in this way; and it is the existence of that compensation which alone renders society tolerable under such circumstances. But the benefit accruing is no adequate set-off, if society be viewed as a whole, to the evil incurred. If two millions of Irish labourers are working at sixpence a-day each, and two millions more of human beings, in the Emerald Isle, are in a state of destitution, it is a poor compensation for such a dreadful state of things to observe, that some hundred Irish noblemen, or absentee proprietors, are spending ten or twenty thousand a-year each amidst the luxuries of London, Paris, or Naples; and that they sometimes extract five or six guineas an acre from their starving tenants. If weavers in Renfrewshire, and cotton operatives in Lancashire, are making cotton cloths at eightpence a-day of wages, we are not to be deluded into the belief that society is prosperous,

because every three or four years six or eight cotton lords buy estates for a hundred thousand pounds a-piece; and one half of the railways in the kingdom are constructed with the wealth of Manchester and Glasgow. There are no two things more different than national riches and the wealth of the rich of a nation.

It is the fatal and ruinous effect of wealth, thus accumulated in the hands of a few, at the expense of the great bulk of the industrious classes in a state, that it tends to perpetuate and increase the diseased and perilous state of society from which it sprang. The common observations, that money makes money, and that poverty breeds poverty, show how universally the experience of mankind has felt that capital, in the long run, gives an overwhelming advantage in the race for riches to the rich, and that poverty as uniformly, ere long, gives the vast superiority in numbers to the poor. We often hear of an earl or a merchant prince mourning the want of an heir, but scarcely ever of a Highland couple or an Irish hovel wanting their overflowing brood of little half-naked savages. We occasionally hear of a poor man raising himself by talent and industry to fortune; but in general he does so only by associating his skill with some existing capital, and giving its owner thus the extraordinary advantage of uniting old wealth with a new discovery. To get on in the world without capital is daily becoming more difficult to the great bulk of men: it is, in trade or commerce at least, wholly impossible. Thus, as wealth accumulates in the capital and great cities of the empire, destitution, poverty, and of course crime and immorality, multiply around the seats where that wealth was originally created. And this evil, so far from abating with the lapse of time, daily increases, and must increase till some dreadful convulsion takes place, and restores the subverted balance of society; because the power of capital, like that of a lever which is continually lengthened, is daily augmenting in the centres of wealth; and the power of numbers in the centres of destitution is hourly on the increase, from the reckless and improvident habits which that destitution has engendered.

The happiness of a nation, its morality, order, and security, are mainly, if not entirely, dependent on the extent to which

property with its attendant blessings, and habits of reflection, regularity, and industry, are diffused among the people. But the doctrines of the *Chrematists*, and of nearly the whole school of modern political economists, go almost entirely to uproot this inestimable blessing. The principle being once fixed in men's minds, and acted upon by individual men and the legislature, that the great thing is to diminish the *cost of production*, it follows, as a very natural consequence, that the main thing is to diminish the *wages of the producers*. Everything which can conduce to that object is vigorously pursued, without the slightest regard to the effect the changes must have on the fortunes, and ultimate fate in life, of whole classes in society. It is thus that, in agriculture, the engrossing of farms takes place—an evil so sorely felt in England during the seventeenth, and in Scotland in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries—and that hundreds and thousands of happy families are dispossessed from their hereditary possessions, to make room for that "devourer of the human race," as the old writers called it, the sheep. It is thus that, in our own times, the small tenants and cottars have been so generally dispossessed in Scotland and Ireland, to make room for the large cultivator or store farmer. It is thus that the race of hand-loom weavers, who carry on their trade in their own houses, and with the advantages of rural residence, gardens, fields, and country air, is everywhere becoming extinct, or their wages have fallen so low as barely to support existence in the very humblest rank of life. In the room of these sturdy old children of the soil, has sprung up a race of puny operatives or labourers, living by wages, and having no durable connexion either with the land, or even with the capitalist who employs them. Employed at weekly wages, they are constantly on the verge of famine if turned out of their employment. Everything now is concentrated in huge mills, manufacturing districts, and great towns, where the labour of men is too often supplanted by women, that of women by children, that of children almost entirely by machinery, on which they attend. The cost of production, indeed, is prodigiously diminished, by the substitution of these feeble or tiny labourers for full-grown men; and with it the profits of the masters, and the circle of the export sale, are proportionally augmented. But at

what expense is this profit to a few gained? At the expense, in some degree at least, it is to be feared, of the independence, the comfort, the morals, the lives, of whole classes of the labouring portions of the community.

The application of knowledge to the arts, of science to manufactures, so far from diminishing, has, hitherto at least, had the most ruinous possible effect in increasing this fatal tendency of great capital and extensive manufactured industry upon mankind. Watt, Arkwright, Crompton—those giants of intellectual power, whose discoveries have augmented tenfold, often a hundredfold, the productive powers of manufacturing labour—have been the worst enemies that the happiness and morals of the working manufacturers ever knew. For what is it that, by means of great capital, working with the powers which their immortal discoveries have conferred, manufacturing industry has become? Why, it has all, or nearly all, run into huge mills, or other establishments, in which machinery, at a cost of thirty, forty, or fifty thousand pounds, is erected, and a crowd of needy women and children are employed, in ordinary times at the lowest wages which can support existence, with a few men, at a guinea or twenty-five shillings a-week, to direct and superintend their labours. It need not be told what the habits of such a crowd of young women, most of them from fourteen to twenty, must in general be. These evils in manufacturing districts are universally felt and complained of; but it is not equally generally admitted, that they arise invariably, and, as matters at present stand, inevitably, from that very extension of science and mechanical power to the arts, which is, in the view of the increase of national wealth, so just a subject of exultation, and which it is so much the object, both of legislative enactment and of individual ingenuity, to augment and extend. Yet is not the crushing effect of these great discoveries on the welfare of the labouring classes, as manifest as their elevating influence on the fortunes of their employers, and the sum total of the produce of national manufactured industry? On no other principle is it possible to explain the prodigious accumulation of wealth in one class of the British empire, and of degradation, misery, crime, and destitution in the other, and far more numerous classes.

The division of labour and the confining of each workman, or workchild, to one limited sphere of employment, while it is productive of a very great increase in the skill which each exerts in his own department, and in consequence augments, in a similar proportion, the net produce of manufactured industry, is still more fatal to the morals, habits, and independence of the manufacturing classes. Variety of occupation is indispensable to vigour of mind or independence of character. The exclusive chaining of the human mind to one employment, even though that employment is of the most intellectual kind, as the duties of the lawyer, the statesman, the physician, or the divine, speedily contracts the understanding, narrows the interest, circumscribes the field of enjoyment, and often hardens the heart. If this is the case, as undoubtedly it is, with those who are exclusively immersed even in the learned professions, which require an exercise of thought, and can be founded only on a long and cultivated education, how much more must it be the case with those whose occupation is purely mechanical, and so trivial that it may be learned in a few days—as twirling a film, twisting a cotton, dabbing a plate, or drawing a cloth out of a vat? Such operatives are exposed, at every period of their lives, to the greatest evils which can debase humanity —uncertainty of subsistence and monotony of occupation. Their work is so simple, that any one can learn it in a few days—therefore they are exposed to competition with the whole labouring classes of the community; it is so uniform that it neither requires, nor is compatible with, intellectual elevation—therefore it is speedily made, by the effect of competition for such simple employment, to engross their whole time. Mental improvement, moral or religious cultivation, are scarcely possible to any but the strongest minds united to the strongest bodies, in the circumstances to which the working classes, under such a system, are speedily reduced. If any one doubts this, let him dig, or hoe, or walk along the road, or trundle a hoop, or bear a fowling-piece for twelve hours a-day without intermission, save at breakfast and dinner, and then see with what appetite he can take to moral or intellectual improvement when he comes in at night.

It is the deplorable effect of such a state of things, that

it tends not merely to perpetuate, but to increase, the very evils from which it has arisen, and reduce the working classes to that state wherein extrication from them is next to impossible. Under the pressure of the ceaseless desire to cheapen production and diminish the cost of manufacture, young persons of both sexes are huddled together into mills and factories, at so early a period of life that they are scarcely fit to leave the nursery. It has recently been found necessary to introduce a special statute to prohibit children being employed in print-fields in England under *eight* years of age. They are so because they can at once earn sixpence or eightpence a-day by standing beside a wheel, or watching a film of cotton which is discharged out of a machine; and this cheap and infantine labour is equally attractive to the parents, who thus discover in their offspring a source of income instead of a burden—and the manufacturer, who finds his work done by little docile labourers, too weak to engage in a strike, and yet able to do the work. No exertion of strength is required, at least none at any one moment, in many of these occupations—though the work, when long continued, is to the last degree exhausting; the steam-engine lifts all the weights and furnishes all the power. Thus there is, from the necessities and interests of all concerned, a constant demand for juvenile labour; and this demand speedily produces its own supply, by promoting early marriages, or fostering a swarm of bastards among persons thus thrown together, at the period of life when the passions are strongest, with a total separation at all times, save bed-time, from that only school of virtue, the parental home.

Moral and intellectual cultivation is, God be praised! not rendered impossible in the more superior and industrious of the manufacturing operatives; but it may be doubted whether the species of literature which is in general presented to them, and unhappily proves most attractive, either strengthens their minds or improves their happiness. Exciting novels, such as those of Victor Hugo, Janin, Sue, and others of that class; highly-wrought pictures of the manners and vices of high life; horrible stories of seduction, murder, and suicide, such as compose so large a part of the modern romance school of France,—are most sure of circulation among the working classes of great towns, because

they at once interest and excite the imagination. They are read to the extent, and for the reason, that novels are so generally devoured by the young, the imaginative, and the indolent of both sexes in the higher ranks. The poor operatives, however, have an excuse for the exclusive reading of such exciting inanities, which does not belong to their higher fellow-citizens; they are so worn out by long-continued toil, that they are unable to *bear the fatigue* of any kind of reading which requires application or reflection. Some, no doubt, are improved by works of a more elevated class, which they contrive to purchase out of their savings, and to devour during the brief period allowed them between labour and repose. But their number is very small in comparison of the whole, as is decisively proved by the limited number of booksellers' shops in the manufacturing towns, compared to those which supply the means of sensual enjoyment. It is seldom in such cities you will find one bookseller's shop for a hundred where beer or spirits are retailed. Many even of those who read are rather injured than improved, both in their habits and their happiness, by the mental cultivation they receive. They contract exaggerated ideas of the enjoyment of riches, and the avenues to distinction which may be opened by intellectual effort; they become dissatisfied with the station in the world which Providence has assigned them; they strive to exchange bodily for intellectual toil; and in the vain attempt to exchange their lot for a better one, numbers are precipitated into difficulties, crimes, and ruin.

The social organisation of trades in all the European cities, during the Middle Ages, was eminently favourable to the working classes; and it was, perhaps, the greatest calamity that ever befell them that, in the madness of democratic ambition, they united with the master employers to pull down these institutions. When each craft was organised in a little republic of its own, with its office-bearers, stated meetings, funds for the indigent, and exclusive privileges, a gradation of ranks was created among the poor—a little aristocracy of industry, which often proved itself capable of contending with the proudest aristocracy of land or riches. The poor were not left alone; the wrongs of individuals were taken up by their craft, joint measures for

the common behoof were pursued, the dreadful feeling of isolation in the midst of a crowd was unknown; all were enrolled under some banner, or entered with some craft. Thus every one felt himself in a fixed and definite place in society; he had privileges and advantages of a tangible kind to forfeit by losing it. But when exclusive privileges, crafts, and incorporations were abolished, amidst cries of joy and shouts of triumph from the whole popular party all over the world, these inestimable blessings were lost. The poor became a mixed indiscriminate multitude, having no more coherence or power of resistance than a rope of sand. They degenerated into a huge assembly of private soldiers without officers, incapable either of organising anything for their own durable benefit, or of resisting the progressive encroachments of capital, machinery, and competition on the sole domain left them—the wages of their labour.

Universally it has been found, that upon the abolition of incorporations and crafts, the condition of the working classes has rapidly and fearfully changed for the worse. The principle of free competition, of breaking down all barriers, allowing every one to elbow his neighbour out of employment, and bringing everything down to the lowest and cheapest level, has tended only to lower the wages of labour and aggravate the insecurity of the poor. No one has a fixed or permanent station, everything is done for days' or weeks' wages; and the penalty of dismissal is destitution, famine, and a lingering death. Hence the constant complaint now on the part of the poor that they cannot get work, and the prodigious multitude of the lowest class who are constantly moving about, seeking in one situation that employment which they have lost in another. This, however, is of all things the most fatal to their habits, character, and prospects: they get among people to whom they are total strangers, who regard them with aversion as intruders, and are neither inclined to relieve their distresses nor to facilitate their advance in the world, The most powerful check, next to religion, on human conduct—*the opinion of friends*—is lost on the very class who stand most in need of its control. Obscurity screens immorality from detection, numbers shelter crime from punishment. The temptations to vice multiply, while the barriers against it are cut away. The

really good poor are invariably stationary; moving about is as fatal to their habits as it is to those of children. The *free circulation of labour*, of which we hear so much from master employers and the Chrematists, is often an advantage with a view to the creation of wealth, or the sudden completion of great undertakings: considered with reference to national morals, happiness, and ultimate safety, it is one of the greatest curses which can befall a people.

It is a sense of the evils arising from this feeling of isolation amidst multitudes, and the experienced inability of the poor, all struggling against each other for subsistence, to resist the progressive decline of their wages till they reach the lowest point consistent with the support of existence, which has made the working classes in France and England of late years so generally embrace, and make such incredible efforts to support, trades-unions. They have endeavoured, in so doing, to regain that organisation of crafts in separate classes and bodies, which was overturned amidst the shouts of triumph consequent on the French Revolution. But this attempt, so far from palliating the existing evils, has had the greatest possible tendency to aggravate them; for it has too often vested irresponsible power in hands wholly unfit to wield it. Perhaps the greatest, the most widespread, the most acute suffering endured by the labouring poor in Great Britain, during the last thirty years, has arisen from strikes. Nothing has tended so strongly to shake society to its centre, to array the working classes against their employers, to spread habits of recklessness, violence, and improvidence among them, and alienate their natural supporters from them by the frightful crimes to which they have given rise. Foresight, industry, regularity of conduct, frugality, saving habits—those prime guardians of humble virtue—are out of the question when men are subjected to the tyranny of these dreadful, popularly elected despots. The last and only possession left to the poor, their own labour, is liable to be reft from them by the imperious commands of an unknown and irresponsible committee, which, elevated to importance by the public distress, uses every means to prolong it, by preventing a return to habits of regular industry. The suffering produced by the compulsory cessation from labour which these committees command,

often for an incredibly long period, never could be borne but by men inflamed by the spirit of party, and contending for what they ignorantly deem their best interests. It equals all that we read of in heroic besieged towns, enduring the extremities of famine before they submit to the besiegers. The Committee of Public Salvation was often shaken by a scarcity of provisions in the capital, and never failed to tremble at the forests of pikes which, when want became severe, issued from the Faubourg St Antoine; but a trades-union committee succeeds in compelling men, by threats of the torch and the dagger, to remain in idleness for months together, and surrender their birthright and inheritance, the support of themselves, the food of their children, to the commands of an unknown power, which retains them in the agonies of want till suffering nature can no longer endure. The actual suffering resulting from this unparalleled tyranny, while it continues, is the least of its evils. A far greater, because more durable and irremediable calamity, is to be found in the demoralising of the poor, by depriving them of occupation, and dividing society, by arraying whole classes against each other.

Industry, during the feudal ages, was often exposed to the most ruthless violence from the hand of power, and men possessed scarcely any security against the occasional oppression of arbitrary monarchs, or the savage devastation of martial incursions. But great as these political evils were, it may be doubted whether they occasioned, in the long run, so serious an invasion on human happiness, and the springs of human virtue, as the *social evils* which, on the cessation of these political disorders, have, unobserved, insinuated themselves through society. The annals of the Middle Ages are filled with the most heart-rending accounts of the outbreaks of savage violence to which the people were subjected; and it appeared impossible that society could ever have recovered the dreadful devastation to which it was frequently exposed. Yet it invariably did recover, and that, too, in an incredibly short space of time. The Crusades were the overflow of the full nations of Europe, after two centuries of that apparently withering hostility. We read of no such resurrection of national strength in Rome under the emperors after the devastations of the barbarians began ; nor

do we hear of any such after the oppression of the pashas and agas in Turkey and Persia at this time. Superficial writers explain this by saying, that these nations are in their decline, and the Gothic nations, during the feudal ages, were in their youth. But the human race is, in all ages, equally young; there is an equal number of young men in proportion to the population in every country and in every age. The reason of the difference is, that social evils have arisen in the one case which were unknown in the other: they have spread and diffused their baneful influence.

The feudal institutions, amidst all their want of protection against political violence or external oppression, had one admirable quality, which enabled society to bear up and advance under all these accumulated evils. They conferred power and influence at home on those only who were *interested* in the welfare of the people. The feudal baron at the head of his armed followers, was doubtless always ready, at the summons of his sovereign, to perform his fifty days' military service, or, at the call of an injured clansman, to make an inroad into the territories of a neighbouring but hostile feudatory. But when he did so, he had nothing to depend upon but his own retainers, serfs, or followers. If they were depressed, starving, alienated, or lukewarm, he was lost; he was defeated in the field, and speedily besieged in his last stronghold. Thus, the most valuable element was universally diffused over society—viz., a sense of mutual dependence, and of the benefit each derived from the prosperity of his neighbours. If the baron was weak or unsupported, his vassals were liable to be plundered, his serfs found themselves without bread. If the vassals were oppressed, the baron was undone: instead of a formidable array of stout men-at-arms, sturdy archers, and gallant spearmen to defend his domains, he found himself followed only by a weak and feeble array, giving awful evidence, in the decisive moment, of the ruinous effects of his disorderly or tyrannical government. Even the serfs were bound up with the prosperity of the little community. If they were weakened by bad usage, or driven from the domain by cruelty, the fields were untilled, the swine unherded, the baron and vassals without bread. Thus it was the interest of all to stand by, protect, and spare each other. Each felt

the consequences of the neglect of these social duties, in immediate and often irreparable injury to himself. It was this experienced necessity of mutual forbearance and support which was the mainspring of social improvement during the feudal ages, and enabled society so quickly to repair the chasm produced by the dreadful political evils to which it was occasionally exposed. Its spring of improvement and happiness was within—its evils were without. We often read, in the annals of those times, of the unbounded plunder and devastation exercised by armed violence upon pacific industry, and the great fortunes sometimes amassed by the robber chivalry, by such predatory incursions. That is the most decisive proof of the presence of political, and the absence of social evils. The people must have been previously protected and prosperous, or they could not have been worth plundering. The annals of these times will transmit no account of fortunes made by pillaging or taxing the cottars of Ireland, the weavers of Paisley, or the cotton-piecers of Manchester.

What rendered the feudal system in the end insupportable, was the change of manners, strengthening of government, and cessation of private wars, which left its evils, and took away its blessings. When the baron lived in rude plenty on his estate, surrounded by his followers, respected by his vassals, feared by his neighbours, his presence was a benefit, his protection a blessing. But when the central government had acquired such strength as to have stopped private warfare; when standing armies had come to supersede the tumultuary feudal array, and the thirst for luxury or office had attracted the nobles to the capital, these blessings were at an end. The advantages of the feudal system had ceased with the removal of the evils it went so far to alleviate; its burdens and restrictions remained, and were felt as an insupportable restraint, without any corresponding benefit, on the rising industry of the people. The seigneur no longer was seen either at the chateau or in the village. In his stead the bailiff made half-yearly visits to exact the rent or feudal services from vassals, whose prosperity had ceased to be any object either of interest or solicitude to their lord. Whether they were rich or poor, happy or miserable, contented or repining, was immaterial to him after he had ceased to reside

in his castle, and to be protected by his armed vassals. The one thing needful was to pay their rents, or perform their services, to maintain his extravagances; and these were accordingly exacted with merciless severity. Thence the general oppression of the poor, and universal outcry against the system, which produced the French Revolution.

The powerful central government, regular taxation, and large standing armies of modern Europe, have removed the chief *political* evils which were at times felt with such dreadful severity during the Middle Ages; but have there not been introduced *social* evils of a still more pernicious and irretrievable character? Private wars have disappeared; we no longer hear of chateaux burnt, fields ravaged, or serfs massacred, in pursuance of the deadly feuds of hostile barons. War has become a separate profession; military service is no longer required from the rural tenants; the undivided attention of industry is permitted to be directed to pacific pursuits. The ravages of hostility, and the destruction of conquest, have been diminished in amount, and greatly alleviated in severity. Taxes levied on the whole community have superseded the necessity, save in extreme cases, of ruinous exactions from individuals; war is often felt rather as a stimulus to industry by its expenditure, than a blight to it from its contributions. It is the influence of these circumstances, joined to the protection of a regular government and the unbounded stimulus of general freedom, which have given so marvellous an impulse to the prosperity of modern Europe, and rendered the British Empire in particular, where their fostering tendency has been most strongly felt, the admiration, the terror, and the envy of the world.

But in lieu of the political oppression and military exactions which, in former days, were felt as so disastrous, a host of *social* evils have sprung up, and are rapidly spreading their baneful influence through every class of society, to such an extent as to render it doubtful whether their effect will not ultimately be to uproot society, and destroy the whole states of modern Europe. These effects have taken place amidst general peace and apparent general prosperity; at a time when wealth was accumulating with unheard-of rapidity, and knowledge was diffused to an unprecedented extent. Law was regularly administered; illegal acts gene-

rally checked ; foreign hostility averted ; domestic oppression removed or softened. The Chrematists were in exultation; production was every day becoming cheaper ; exports and imports in consequence increasing ; and all the external symptoms of the highest prosperity, according to the doctrine of the *wealth* of nations, in the most flourishing state. But all these blessings have been neutralised, and a large portion of the community precipitated into the most woful degradation, by the operation of the very causes which have produced this vast increase of wealth, and its astonishing accumulation in the hands of a part of the commercial community. The incessant efforts to lessen the cost of production have beat down the wages of labour in many departments to the lowest point ; the strenuous exertions made to facilitate cheaper importation have reduced the remuneration of domestic industry to the lowest point consistent with its existence. Incredible have been the efforts made by all classes to counterbalance by additional industry this disastrous progress ; but the only effect of these efforts has been to augment the evil complained of, by increasing the necessity for exertion, and augmenting the mass of production with which society is flooded. Production in every line has come, in ordinary times, to outstrip consumption. Machinery has quadrupled its power ; gorged markets are constantly complained of as depriving industry of its just reward, and often of any at all. Society has become a great gambling-house, in which colossal fortunes are made by a few, and the great majority are turned adrift penniless, friendless, to destitution, ruin, or suicide. The condition of a considerable portion of the working-classes has, in this terrible strife, generally been wofully changed for the worse. Brief periods of high prices, which induce habits of extravagance among them, are succeeded by long seasons of distress, which spread the reality of woe. In the desperate effort made to extend the foreign market, by cheapening production, nearly all the kindly relations of life have been snapped asunder. The operative is unknown to the master-employer ; he is turned off at a moment's warning into a cold world, in which he can find no other employment. The tenant is too often a stranger to the landlord; or, at least, strangers are constantly brought on the land. The labourer, even, is in many cases

unknown to the farmer; his place can always be supplied by a stranger, ready, probably, to work for less wages, because in greater distress. Everything is put up to auction, and sold to the highest bidder. Labour only is awarded to the lowest.

A nation which has surrendered its government to the commercial classes, and at the same time has a large population and considerable territorial possessions, cannot fail to incur ruin if their rule is long continued. The reason is, that their interest is adverse to that of the most numerous, important, and valuable classes of society; and they never cease to prosecute that interest till they have destroyed them. To import largely is for their interest; therefore, they promote all measures tending to favour the introduction of foreign productions, though their effect must be to depress, and in the end extinguish, native industry. They would have the people pay for these imports by enlarged exports; in other words, they would convert society into a mere appendage of the trading classes. To enlarge these exports, they make the most strenuous effort in every possible way to cheapen production—that is, to lower the wages of labour. Their idea of a perfect society is one in which the labouring classes are reduced to the rank of mere attendants on machines, because that is the cheapest form of production. They would have them attend on these machines at sixpence or ninepence a-day, live chiefly on potatoes, and eat no bread but what is imported in foreign vessels, and from foreign countries, because they are cheaper than their own. In this way both exports and imports would be elevated to the highest pitch; for the main part of the national food would figure in the imports, and the main part of national labour in the exports. Mercantile business would come to supersede every other—it alone would be attended with any profit. Meanwhile, domestic industry would languish and decline—the home market would be destroyed—the rural population, the mainstay of a nation, gradually withered away and wasted. Poverty and misery would weaken and alienate the working classes; and, amidst a constant increase of exports and imports, and growth of commercial wealth, the nation would be destroyed.

This is no imaginary picture. The ruin of the Roman

empire in ancient, the desolation of the Campagna of Rome in modern times, are permanent proofs of its reality.

It is generally said that slavery was the devouring cancer which destroyed the Roman Empire, and thence it is concluded by the Chrematists that, as we have no slaves, we can never be ruined like them. They forget that the reality of slavery may exist, and its evils remain, although its name has been expunged from the statute book. It is always to be recollected that slavery existed to just as great an extent in the most flourishing as in the decaying periods of the Roman dominion—in the days of Scipio and Cæsar, as in those of Constantine or Honorius. Cato was a great dealer in slaves. He was especially careful to sell his slaves when they *became old*, lest, when worn out, they should become chargeable. The republic was brought to the brink of ruin a hundred years before the birth of Christ by the Servile War; yet, with that devouring cancer in its intestines, it afterwards conquered the world. It was not slavery, but the combination of slavery with free trade and vast patrician and commercial wealth, which really brought ruin on the ancient world. "Verumque confitentibus," says Pliny, "*latifundia* perdidere Italiam: imo et provincias." It was the accumulation of patrician revenue and commercial wealth in the capital, when the provinces were cultivated only by slaves, and the gradual extinction of Italian agriculture by the introduction of Egyptian and Libyan grain—where it could be raised cheaper than in the Italian fields, because money was less plentiful in the impoverished extremities than in the gorged centre of the Empire,—which was the real cause of its ruin. The free race of Italian cultivators, the strength of the legions, disappeared before the fleets which wafted cheap grain from the banks of the Nile and the shores of Africa to the Tiber. Thence the impoverishing of the small freeholders—the buying up of all small freeholds by the great families—the extinction of grain culture in Italy—the managing of the huge estates into which the country was parcelled, in pasture cultivation, by means of slaves—the disappearance of Italian free husbandmen—and the ruin of the Empire. So rich was the capital when it fell, that Olympiodorus has recorded that, when Alaric appeared before Rome, it contained within its walls

seventeen hundred and fifty great families, many of whom had estates, almost entirely in pasturage, which yielded them one hundred and sixty thousand pounds sterling of yearly rent, or above £300,000 a-year of our money.

To the same cause is to be ascribed the continued desolation of the Campagna of Rome in modern times. Slavery has disappeared; but the curse of an unlimited and extraordinary supply of foreign grain to the Tiber still continues, and chains the proprietors of the *Agro Romano* to pasturage as the only means of profitable cultivation. Travellers are never weary of expressing their astonishment at the desolation which comes up to the very gates of Rome, as of Constantinople; but a very simple cause explains it in both. It is more profitable to keep the land in pasturage than to lay it out in grain cultivation, by reason of the deluge of foreign grain raised in semi-barbarous countries, with which the capital is flooded. From official documents laid before the Papal Government, which made the most anxious and minute inquiries into this subject, it appears that 8000 crowns laid out in agriculture in the Campagna of Rome, at the prices of Rome, would bring in a profit of only 30 crowns a-year; while the same sum laid out in pasturage of sheep, on the same land, would bring in 1972 crowns. It is not surprising, in these circumstances, that the Campagna remains in grass.*

The cause of this extraordinary state of things is to be found, not in any peculiar adaptation of the Campagna to grass cultivation; for the land is, generally, of the most extraordinary fertility, and in former times, in the infancy of Rome, literally speaking "every rood had its man." The cause, and the sole cause, is to be found in the constant low price of grain in the capital, and the purchase of the *whole of its supply* from foreign states. The Papal Government inherited from its Imperial predecessor the habit, and the necessity, of making periodical distributions of grain, at a cheap rate, to the people. The people inherited, from the lazy successors of the conquerors of the world, the habit of looking to the public stores for cheap distributions of food, as those of Paris did during the Revolution. Government, elective, weak, without any armed force, and in the hands of

* Nicolai, *dell' Agro Romano*, iii. 167–171. Sismondi's *Etudes Sociales*, ii. 46.

priests, had not courage to incur the present hazard consequent on a departure from this ruinous system; and they bought their grain, of course, where they could get it cheapest—in Egypt, Odessa, and the Levant. The banks of the Volga are to modern, what those of the Nile were to ancient Rome. The Campagna has been chained to sterility and desolation by the same cause in modern as in ancient times—under the Popes as the Emperors. So far has this evil gone, that in 1797, when the Papal Government was overturned by the French, the *Casa Annonaria* of the Apostolic Chamber, or Board of Public Subsistence, exhibited a deficit of 3,293,000 crowns, (£645,000,) incurred in retailing bread to the people cheaper than they could purchase it even in the cheapest foreign markets.*

The Campagna of Rome is the great type of the state to which the doctrine of the Chrematists would reduce the states of modern Europe. Agriculture, ruined by the perpetual curse of foreign importation; urban industry alone flourishing by the stimulus of foreign export; vast fortunes accumulated in the hands of a few merchants and great proprietors; constant distress among the labouring poor; all the symptoms of prosperity in the cities—all the marks of decay in the country; luxury the most unbounded, side by side with penury the most pinching; an overflow of wealth which cannot find employment, in one class of society; a mass of destitution that seeks in vain for work, in another; a middle class daily diminishing in number and declining in importance, between the two extremes; and government, under the influence of popular institutions, yielding to all the demands of the opulent class, because it gives money—and deaf to all the cries of the impoverished, because they can only ask for bread. The name of slavery is indeed abolished in Western Europe, but is its reality, are its evils, not present? Have we not retained its fetters, its restraints, its degradations, without its obligation to support? Are not the English factory children often practically in a worse servitude than in the Eastern harem? If the men are not "ascripti glebæ," are they not "*ascripti molinis ac carbonariis?*" What

* Nicolai, *dell' Agro Romano*, iii. 153. Sismondi's *Etudes Sociales*, ii. 44. This part of Sismondi's work, which will be found vol. ii. pp. 1–74, is highly interesting.

trade can a factory girl or coal-mine child take to, if thrown out of employment? The master cannot flog them, or bring them back by force to his workshop. Mighty difference! He can starve them if they leave it: he chains them to their mills by the invincible bond of necessity. They have the evils of slavery without its advantages. Can, or ought, such a state of things long continue? Whether this is descriptive of the state of society in France and England, let those determine who are familiar with the people of either of these countries.

Such are Sismondi's political views, which are enforced in the volumes before us by a vast array of historical and statistical facts, which, as well as the deservedly acknowledged talent and character of the writer, entitle them to the highest respect, and render them of the deepest interest. That they are "important if true," as the Americans say, no one will deny: that they are of immediate and pressing application to the state of society in the British islands, none acquainted with it, especially in the manufacturing districts, will be so bold as to dispute. We have deemed it best to give an abstract of his opinions and principles in a condensed form, in preference to quoting individual passages, because he expands his ideas so much, that the latter course would have enabled us to give only a limited number of his views. Those who will take the trouble to turn to the original volumes, will find every sentence in the preceding abstract enforced and illustrated at least a dozen times in this most able and original work. That we consider his ideas as in the main just, and his anticipations too likely to prove well founded, may be inferred from the pains we have taken to form a digest of them in the preceding pages. We only hope that, though he possibly has not much exaggerated the social evils which now threaten society, he has not given their due weight to the many alleviating or corrective causes which, in a free, religious, and moral community, are constantly called into activity when society has come to require their operation. Sismondi says, though he has been enforcing these principles for twenty years, he has found few converts to his opinion in France; and that he does not think he would have found one, if the English Parliamentary Reports had not afforded decisive evidence of the existence of many

of these social evils, amidst unbounded commercial prosperity and the highest political power in Great Britain. The social evils which destroyed Rome, he reminds us, were in full activity during the eighty years of the splendid, pacific, and wise rule of the Antonines—the most happy, to external appearance, which the world ever knew. Their baneful influence appeared at once, when political dangers commenced with the accession of Commodus. These doctrines are not the less likely to be true that they are contrary to general opinion, that they run counter to many important interests, that they are incapable of present application, that they are adverse to the policy of the rulers of the state. Government rules men, but Providence rules government, and will in the end assert its supremacy, and right the moral evils of mankind, or punish the sins of nations.

POLAND

[BLACKWOOD'S MAGAZINE, August 1831]

Poland in ancient possessed very much the extent and dominion of Russia in Europe in modern times. It stretched from the Baltic to the Euxine ; from Smolensko to Bohemia ; and embraced within its bosom the whole Scythia of antiquity—the storehouse of nations, from whence the hordes issued who so long pressed upon and at last overthrew the Roman empire. Its inhabitants have in every age been celebrated for their heroic valour : they twice captured the ancient capital of Russia, and the conflagration of Moscow and retreat of Napoleon were but the repetition of what had resulted five centuries before from the appearance of the Polish eagles aiding the Tartar horse on the banks of the Moskwa. Placed on the frontiers of European civilisation, they long formed its barrier against barbarian invasion : and the most desperate wars they ever maintained were those which they had to carry on with their own subjects, the Cossacks of the Ukraine, whose roving habits and predatory life disdained the restraints of regular government. When we read the accounts of the terrible struggles they maintained with the great insurrection of these formidable hordes under Bogdan, in the seventeenth century, we are transported to the days of Scythian warfare, and recognise the features of that dreadful invasion of the Sarmatian tribes, which the genius of Marius averted from the Roman republic.

Nor has the military spirit of the people declined in modern times. The victories of Sobieski, the deliverance of Vienna, seem rather the fiction of romance than the records of real achievement. No victory so glorious as that of

Kotzim had been gained by Christendom over the Saracens since the triumphs of Richard on the field of Ascalon: and the tide of Mahommedan conquest would have rolled resistlessly over the plains of Germany, even in the reign of Louis XIV., if it had not been arrested by the Polish hero under the walls of Vienna. Napoleon said it was the peculiar quality of the Polanders to form soldiers more rapidly than any other people. And their exploits in the Italian and Spanish campaigns justified the high eulogium and avowed partiality of that great commander. No swords cut deeper than theirs into the Russian ranks during the campaign of 1812, and alone, amidst universal defection, they maintained their faith inviolate after the rout of Leipsic. But for the hesitation of the French emperor in restoring their independence, the whole strength of the kingdom would have been roused on the invasion of Russia; and had this been done, had the Polish monarchy formed the support of French ambition, the history of the world might have been changed;

> "From Fate's dark book one leaf been torn,
> And Flodden had been Bannockburn."

How, then, has it happened that a country of such immense extent, inhabited by so martial a people, whose strength on great occasions was equal to such achievements, should in every age have been so unfortunate, that their victories should have led to no result, and their valour so often proved inadequate to save their country from dismemberment. The plaintive motto, *Quomodo lapsus! Quid feci?*—may with still more justice be applied to the fortunes of Poland than the fall of the Courtenays. "Always combating," says Salvandy, "frequently victorious, they never gained an accession of territory, and were generally glad to terminate a glorious contest by a cession of the ancient provinces of the republic."

Superficial observers will answer, that it was the elective form of government; their unfortunate situation in the midst of military powers, and the absence of any chain of mountains to form the refuge of unfortunate patriotism. But a closer examination will demonstrate that these causes were not sufficient to explain the phenomenon; and that the series of disasters which have so long overwhelmed the

monarchy, have arisen from a more permanent and lasting cause than either their physical situation or their elective government.

The Polish crown has not always been elective. For two hundred and twenty years they were governed by the race of the Jagellons with as much regularity as England by the Plantagenets; and yet, during that dynasty, the losses of the republic were fully as great as in the subsequent periods. Prussia is as flat, and incomparably more sterile, than Poland, and, with not a third of the territory, it is equally exposed to the ambition of its neighbours: yet Prussia, so far from being the subject of partition, has steadily increased in territory and population. The fields of Poland, as rich and fertile as those of Flanders, seem the prey of every invader, while the patriotism of the Flemings has studded their plains with defensive fortresses which have secured their independence, notwithstanding the vicinity of the most ambitious and powerful monarchy in Europe. The real cause of the never-ending disasters of Poland is to be found in the *democratic equality* which, from the remotest ages, has prevailed in the country. The elective form of government was the consequence of this principle in their constitution, which has descended to them from Scythian freedom, and has entailed upon the state disasters worse than the whirlwind of Scythian invasion.

"It is a mistake," says Salvandy, "to suppose that the representative form of government was found in the woods of Germany. What was found in the woods was *Polish equality*, which has descended unimpaired in all the parts of that vast monarchy to the present times.* It was not to our Scythian ancestors, but the early councils of the Christian church, that we are indebted for the first example of representative assemblies." In these words of great and philosophic importance is to be found the real origin of the disasters of Poland.

The principle of government, from the earliest times in Poland, was, that every freeman had an equal right to the administration of public affairs, and that he was entitled to exercise this right, not by representation, but in person. The result of this was, that the whole freemen of the country

* Salvandy, vol. i. *Tableau Historique.*

constituted the real government; and the diets were attended by 100,000 horsemen, the great majority of whom were, of course, ignorant and in necessitous circumstances, while all were penetrated with an equal sense of their importance as members of the Polish state. The convocation of these tumultuous assemblies was almost invariably the signal for murder and disorder. Thirty or forty thousand lackeys, in the service of the nobles, but still possessing the rights of freemen, followed their masters to the place of meeting, and were ever ready to support their ambition by military violence ; while the unfortunate natives, eaten up by such an enormous assemblage of armed men, regarded the meeting of the citizens in the same light as the inhabitants of the Grecian city did the invasion of Xerxes, when they returned thanks to the gods that he had not dined in their neighbourhood, or every living creature would have perished.

So far did the Poles carry this equality among all the free citizens, that by an original and fundamental law, called the *Liberum Veto, any one* member of the diet, by simply interposing his negative, could stop the election of the sovereign, or any other measure the most essential to the public welfare. Of course, in so immense a multitude, some are always to be found factious or venal enough to exercise this dangerous power, either from individual perversity, the influence of external corruption, or internal ambition ; and hence the numerous occasions on which diets, assembled for the most important purposes, were broken up without having come to any determination, and the Republic left a prey to anarchy, at the time when it stood most in need of the unanimous support of its members. It is a striking proof how easily men are deluded by the phantom of general equality, when it is recollected that this ruinous privilege has not only, in every age, been clung to as the *Magna Charta* of Poland, but that the native historians, recounting distant events, speak of any infringement upon it as the most fatal measure to the liberties and welfare of the country.

All human institutions, however, must be subject to some check, which renders it practicable to get through business on urgent occasions, in spite of individual opposition. The Poles held it utterly at variance with every principle of freedom to bind any freeman by a law to which he had not

consented. The principle, that the majority could bind the minority, seemed to them inconsistent with the most elementary ideas of liberty. To get quit of the difficulty, they commonly massacred the recusant; and this appeared, in their eyes, a much less serious violation of freedom than out-voting him; because, said they, instances of violence are few, and do not go beyond the individual sufferers; but when once the rulers establish that the majority can compel the minority to yield, no man has any security against the violation of his freedom.

Extremes meet. It is curious to observe how exactly the violation of freedom by popular folly coincides, in its effect, with its extinction by despotic power. The bowstring in the Seraglio, and assassination at St Petersburg, are the limitations on arbitrary power in these despotic states. Popular murders were the means of restraining the exorbitant liberty of the Poles within the limits necessary for the maintenance of the forms even of regular government. Strange, as Salvandy has well observed, that the nation the most jealous of its liberty should, at the same time, adhere to a custom of all others the most destructive to freedom; and that, to avoid the government of one, they should submit to the despotism of all!

It is this original and fatal passion for *equality* which has in every age proved fatal to Polish independence—which has paralysed all the valour of her people, and all the enthusiasm of her character—and rendered the most warlike nation in Europe the most unfortunate. The measures of its government partook of the unstable and vacillating character of all popular assemblages. Bursts of patriotism were succeeded by periods of dejection; and the endless changes in the objects of popular inclination, rendered it impracticable to pursue any steady object, or adhere, through all the varieties of fortune, to one uniform system for the good of the state. Their wars exactly resembled the contests in la Vendée, where, a week after the most glorious successes, the victorious army was dissolved, and the leaders wandering with a few followers in the woods. At the battle of Kotzim, Sobieski commanded 40,000 men, the most regular army which for centuries Poland had sent into the field; at their head, he stormed the Turkish intrenchments, though defended

by 80,000 veterans and 300 pieces of cannon; he routed that mighty host, slew 50,000 men, and carried the Polish ensigns in triumph to the banks of the Danube. But while Europe resounded with his praises, and expected the deliverance of the Greek empire from his exertions, his army dissolved; the troops returned to their homes; and the invincible conqueror was barely able to keep the field with a few thousand men.

Placed on the frontiers of Europe and Asia, the Polish character and history have partaken largely of the effects of the institutions of both these quarters of the globe. Their passion for equality, their spirit of freedom, their national assemblages, unite them to European independence; their unstable fortune, perpetual vacillation, and chequered annals, partake of the character of Asiatic adventure. While the states by whom they are surrounded have shared in the steady progress of European civilisation, the Polish monarchy has been distinguished by the extraordinary vicissitudes of Eastern story. Elevated to the clouds during periods of heroic adventure, it has sunk to nothing upon the death of a single chief; the republic which had recently carried its arms in triumph to the neighbouring capitals, was soon struggling for its existence with a contemptible enemy; and the bulwark of Christendom in one age was, in the next, razed from the book of nations.

Would we discover the cause of this vacillation, of which the deplorable consequences are now so strongly exemplified, we shall find it in the passion for equality which appears in every stage of their history, and of which M. Salvandy, a Liberal historian, has given a powerful picture:—

"The proscription of their greatest princes," says he, "and, after their death, the calumnies of posterity, faithfully echoing the follies of contemporaries, have destroyed all those who, in different ages, have endeavoured in Poland to create a solid or protecting power. Nothing is more extraordinary than to hear the modern annalists of that unfortunate people, whatever their country or doctrine may be, mechanically repeat all the national outcry against what they call their despotic tyrants. Facts speak in vain against such prejudices. In the eyes of the Poles, nothing was worthy of preservation in their country but *liberty and equality*,—a high-sounding expression, which the French Revolution had not the glory of inventing, nor its authors the wisdom to apply more judiciously.

"Contrary to what has occurred everywhere else in the world, the Poles have never been at rest but under the rule of feeble monarchs. Great and vigorous kings were uniformly the first to perish; they have always sunk

under vain attempts to accustom an independent nobility to the restraints of authority, or soften to their slaves the yoke of bondage. Thus the royal authority, which elsewhere expanded on the ruins of the feudal system, has in Poland only become weaker with the progress of time. All the efforts of its monarchs to enlarge their prerogative have been shattered against a compact, independent, courageous body of freemen, who, in resisting such attempts, have never either been weakened by division, nor intimidated by menace. In their passion for equality, in their jealous independence, they were unwilling even to admit any distinction between each other; they long and haughtily rejected the titles of honour of foreign states, and, even till the last age, refused to recognise those hereditary distinctions and oppressive privileges which are now so fast disappearing from the face of society. They even went so far as to insist that one, in matters of deliberation, should be equal to all. The crown was thus constantly at war with a democracy of nobles. The dynasty of the Piasts strove, with much ability, to create in the midst of that democracy a few leading families, by the side of those nobles a body of burghers. These things, difficult in all states, were there impossible. A hereditary dynasty, always stormy and often interrupted, was unfit for the persevering efforts requisite for such a revolution. In other states the monarchs pursued a uniform policy, and their subjects were vacillating; there, the people were steady, and the crown changeable."—Vol. i. 71.

"In other states, time had everywhere established the hereditary descent of honours and power. Hereditary succession was established from the throne to the smallest fief, from the reciprocal necessity of subduing the vanquished people, and securing to each his share in the conquests. In Poland, on the other hand, the waywodes or warlike chieftains, the magistrates and civil authorities, the governors of castles and provinces, so far from founding an aristocracy by establishing the descent of their honours or offices in their families, were seldom even nominated by the king. Their authority, especially that of the Palatins, excited equal umbrage in the sovereign who should have ruled, as the nobles who should have obeyed them. There was thus authority and order nowhere in the state.

"It is not surprising that such men should unite to the pride which could bear nothing above, the tyranny which could spare nothing below them. In the dread of being compelled to share their power with their inferiors elevated by riches or intelligence, they affixed a stigma on every useful profession as a mark of servitude. Their maxim was, that nobility of blood was not lost by indigence or domestic service, but totally extinguished by commerce or industry. This policy perpetually withheld from the great body of serfs the use of arms, because they had learned to fear, but still continued to despise them. In fine, jealous of every species of superiority as a personal outrage, of every authority as a usurpation, of every labour as a degradation, this society was at variance with every principle of human prosperity.

"Weakened in this manner in their external contests, by their equality not less than their tyranny, inferior to their neighbours in number and discipline, the Poles were the only warlike people in the world to whom victory never gave either peace or conquest. Incessant contests with the Germans, the Hungarians, the pirates of the north, the Cossacks of the Ukraine, the Osmanlis, occupy their whole annals; but never did the Polish eagles advance the frontiers of the republic. Poland saw Moravia, Brandenburg, Pomerania, escape from its government, as Bohemia and Mecklenburg had formerly done, without ever being awakened to the necessity of establishing a central government sufficiently strong to coerce and protect so many discordant materials. She was destined to drink to the last dregs the bitter consequences of a pitiless aristocracy and a senseless equality.

"Vainly did Time, whose ceaseless course, by breaking through that

fierce and oppressive equality, had succeeded where its monarchs had failed, strive to introduce a better order of things. Poland was destined, in all the ages of its history, to differ from all the other European states. With the progress of wealth, a race of burghers at length sprung up—an aristocracy of wealth and possessions arose; but both, contrary to the genius of the people, perished before they arrived at maturity. The first was speedily overthrown; in the convulsion consequent upon the establishment of the last, the national independence was destroyed."—Vol. i. 74.

Of the practical consequences of this fatal passion for equality in the legislature and the form of government, our author gives the following curious account :—

"The extreme difficulty of providing food for their *comitia* of a hundred thousand citizens on horseback, obliged the members of the Diet to terminate their deliberations in a few days—or rather to separate, after having devoured all the food in the country, commenced a civil war, and determined nothing. The constant recurrence of such disasters at length led to an attempt to introduce territorial deputies, invested with full power to carry on the ordinary and routine business of the state. But so adverse was any delegation of authority to the original nature of Polish independence, that this beneficial institution never was established in Poland but in the most incomplete manner. Its introduction corrected none of the ancient abuses. The King was still the president of tumultuous assemblies; surrounded by obstacles on every side; controlled by generals and ministers not of his own selection; obliged to defend the acts of a cabinet which he could not control, against the cries of a furious diet. And these diets, which united, sabre in hand, under the eye of the sovereign, and still treated of all the important affairs of the state—of war and peace, the election of a sovereign, the formation of laws—which gave audience to ambassadors, and administered justice in important cases—were still the Champs de Mars of the northern tribes, and partook to the very last of all the vices of the savage character. There was the same confusion of powers, the same elements of disorder, the same license to themselves, the same tyranny over others.

"This attempt at a representative government was destructive to the last shadow of the royal authority; the meetings of the deputies became fixed and frequent; the power of the sovereign was lost without any permanent body arising to receive it in his room. The system of deputations made slow progress; and in several provinces was never admitted. General diets where the whole nation assembled became more rare, and therefore more perilous; and as they were convoked only on great occasions, and to discuss weighty interests, the fervour of passion was superadded to the inexperience of business.

"Speedily the representative assemblies became the object of jealousy on the part of this democratic race; and the citizens of the republic sought only to limit the powers which they had conferred on their representatives. Often the jealous multitude, terrified at the powers with which they had invested the deputies, were seized with a sudden panic, and hastened together from all quarters, with their arms in their hands, to watch over their proceedings. Such assemblies were styled 'Diets under the Buckler.' But generally they restricted and qualified their powers at the moment of election. The electors confined their parliaments to a circle of limited questions: *gave them obligatory directions; and held, after every session, what they called post-comitial diets, the object of which was to exact from every deputy a rigid account of the execution of his mandate. Thus every question of importance was, in effect, decided in the provinces before it was debated in*

the national assembly. And, as unanimity was still considered essential to a decision, the passing of any legislative act became impossible when there was any variance among the instructions to the deputies. Thus the majority were compelled to disregard the protestations of the minority; and, to guard against that tyranny, the only remedy seemed to be to establish, in favour of the outvoted minority, the right of civil war. Confederations were established; armed leagues, formed of discontented nobles, who elected a marshal or president, and opposed decrees to decrees, force to force, diet to diet, tribune to tribune; and had alternately the King for its leader and its captive. What deplorable institutions, which opened to all the discontented a legal channel for spreading anarchy through their country! The only astonishing thing is, that the valour of the Polish nobility so long succeeded in concealing these mortal defects in their institutions. One would have imagined that a nation, under such customs, could not exist a year; and yet it seemed never weary either of victories or folly."—Vol. i. 116.

No apology is necessary for the length of these quotations; for they are not only illustrative of the causes of the uniform disasters of Poland, but eminently instructive as to the tendency of democratic institutions all over the world.

There is no danger that the inhabitants of England or France will flock in person to the opening of Parliament, and establish diets of two or three hundred thousand freemen, with sabres by their sides; but there is a very great danger that they will adopt the democratic jealousy of their representatives, and bind them down by fixed instructions to a course of conduct which will both render nugatory all the advantages of a deliberative assembly, and sow the seeds of dissension, jealousy, and civil war between the different members of the state. This is the more to be apprehended, because this evil was felt in the strongest manner in France during the progress of the Revolution, and has appeared in America most remarkably even during the brief period of its political existence.

The Legislators of America are not in any sense *statesmen*; they are merely *delegates*, bound to obey the directions of their constituents, and sent there to forward the individual interest of the province, district, or borough which they represent. Their debates are languid and uninteresting; conducted with no idea whatever of convincing, but merely of showing the constituents of each member what he had done for his daily hire of seven dollars. The Constituent Assembly met, with *cahiers* or instructions to the deputies from all the electors; and so much did this jealousy of the legislature increase with the progress of the *movements* in France, that the surest road to popularity

with the electors was soon found to be, the most abject professions of submission to their will. Every one knows how long and vehemently annual parliaments have been demanded by the English Radicals, in order to give them an opportunity of constantly exercising this surveillance over their representatives; and how many members of the present House of Commons are under a positive pledge to their constituents on more than one momentous question. It is interesting to observe how much mankind, under all varieties of climate, situation, and circumstances, are governed by the same principles; and to trace the working of the same causes in Polish anarchy, French revolutions, American selfishness, and British democracy.

Whoever considers the matter dispassionately, and attends to the lessons of history, must arrive at the conclusion, that this democratic spirit cannot coexist with regular government or national independence in ancient states; and that Polish anarchy is the necessary prelude in all such communities to Muscovite oppression. The reason is eternal, and, being founded in the nature of things, must be the same in all ages. When the true democratic spirit is once generally diffused, men invariably acquire such an inordinate jealousy of their superiors that they thwart all measures, even of the most obvious and undeniable utility; and, by a perpetual change of governors, gratify their own equalising spirit at the expense of the best interests of the state. This disposition appears at present in France and England in the rapid changes of administration which have taken place within the last few years, to the total destruction of any uniformity of government, or the prosecution of any systematic plan for the public good: it appears in America in the execrable system of rotation of office—in other words, of the expulsion of every man from official situations, the moment he becomes qualified to hold them, which a recent able observer has so well exposed;* it appeared in Poland in the uniform weakness of the executive, and periodical returns of anarchy, which rendered them, in despite of their native valour, unfortunate in every contest, and at last led to the partition of the republic.

Never was there a truer observation, than that wherever

* Captain Hall.

the tendency of prevailing institutions is hurtful, there is an under current perpetually flowing, destined to correct them. As this equalising and democratic spirit is utterly destructive to the best interests of society, and the happiness of the very people who indulge in it, so, by the wisdom of nature, it leads rapidly and certainly to its own destruction. The moment that it became paramount in the Roman Republic, it led to the civil convulsions which brought on the despotism of the Cæsars; its career was rapidly cut short in France by the sword of Napoleon; it exterminated Poland from the book of nations; it threatens to close the long line of British greatness; it will convulse or subjugate America, the moment that growing republic is brought in contact with warlike neighbours, or finds the safety-valve of the back settlements closed against the escape of turbulent multitudes.

The father of John Sobieski, whose estates lay in the Ukraine, has left a curious account of the manners and habits of the Cossacks in his time, which was about two hundred years ago. "The great majority," said he, "of these wandering tribes think of nothing but the affairs of their little families, and encamp, as it were, in the midst of the towns which belong to the crown or the noblesse. They interrupt the ennui of repose by frequent assemblies, and their *comitia* are generally civil wars, often attended by profuse bloodshed. It is there that they choose their hetman, or chief, by acclamation, followed by throwing their bearskin caps in the air. Such is the inconstancy in the multitude that they frequently destroy their own work; but as long as the hetman remains in power, he has the right of life and death. The town Tretchmiron, in Kiovia, is the arsenal of their warlike implements and their treasure. There is deposited the booty taken by their pirates in Romelia and Asia Minor; and there are also preserved, with religious care, the immunities granted to their nation by the republic. There are displayed the standards which the king sends them, whenever they take up arms for the service of the republic. It is round this royal standard that the nation assemble in their *comitia*. The hetman there does not presume to address the multitude but with his head uncovered, with a respectful air, ready to exculpate

himself from all the charges brought against him, and to solicit humbly his share of the spoils taken from the enemies. These fierce peasants are passionately fond of war; few are acquainted with the use of the musket; the pistol and sabre are their ordinary weapons. Thanks to their light and courageous squadrons, Poland can face the infantry of the most powerful nations on earth. They are as serviceable in retreat as in success; when discomfited, they form, with their chariots ranged in several lines in a circular form, an intrenched camp, to which no other fortifications can be compared. Behind that defence, they defy the attacks of the most formidable enemy."

Of the species of troops who composed the Polish army, our author gives the following curious account,—a striking proof of the national weakness that follows the fatal passion for equality, which formed their grand national characteristic :

" Five different kinds of soldiers composed the Polish army. There was, in the first place, the mercenaries, composed of Hungarians, Wallachians, Cossacks, Tartars, and Germans, who would have formed the strength and nucleus of the army, had it not been that, on the least delay in their payments, they invariably turned their arms against the government: the national troops, to whose maintenance a fourth of the national revenue was devoted: the volunteers, under which name were included the levies of the great nobles, and the ordinary guards which they maintained in time of peace: the *Pospolite*, that is, the array of the whole free citizens, who, after three summonses from the king, were obliged to come forth under the banners of their respective palatines, but only to remain a few months in the field, and who could not be ordered beyond the frontiers. This last unwieldy body, however brave, was totally deficient in discipline, and in general served only to manifest the weakness of the republic. It was seldom called forth but in civil wars. The legions of valets, grooms, and drivers, who encumbered the other force, may be termed a fifth branch of the military force of Poland; but these fierce retainers, naturally warlike and irascible, injured the army more by their pillage and dissensions, than they assisted it by their numbers.

" All these different troops were deficient in equipment; obliged to provide themselves with everything, and to collect their subsistence by their own authority, they were encumbered with an incredible quantity of baggage-waggons, destined, for the most part, less to convey provisions than to carry off plunder. They had no corps of engineers; the artillery, composed of a few pieces of small calibre, had no other officers than a few French adventurers, upon whose adherence to the republic implicit reliance could not be placed. The infantry were few in number, composed entirely of the mercenary and royal troops; but this arm was regarded with contempt by the haughty nobility. The foot-soldiers were employed in digging ditches, throwing bridges, and cutting down forests, rather than actual warfare. Sobieski was exceedingly desirous of having in his camp a considerable force of infantry; but two invincible obstacles prevented it,—the prejudices of the country, and the penury of the royal treasury.

" The whole body of the Pospolite, the volunteers, the *valets d'armée*, and a large part of the mercenaries and national troops, served on horseback. The heavy cavalry, in particular, constituted the strength of the armies; there were to be found united, riches, splendour, and number. They were divided into cuirassiers and hussars—the former clothed in steel, man and horse bearing casque and cuirass, lance and sabre, bows and carbines; the latter defended only by a twisted hauberk, which descended from the head, over the shoulders and breast, and armed with a sabre and pistol. Both were distinguished by the splendour of their dress and equipage, and the number and costly array of their mounted servants, accoutred in the most bizarre manner, with huge black plumes, and skins of bears and other wild beasts. It was the boast of this body, that they were composed of men all measured, as they expressed it, by the same standard; that is, equal in nobility, equally enjoying the rights to obey only their God and their swords, and equally destined, perhaps, to step one day into the throne of the Piasts and the Jagellons. The hussars and cuirassiers were called *Towarzirz*, that is, companions; they called each other by that name, and they were designated in the same way by the sovereign, whose chief boast was to be *Primus inter pares*, the first among equals."—Vol. i. 129.

With so motley and discordant a force, it is not surprising that Poland was unable to make head against the steady ambition and regular forces of the military monarchies with which it was surrounded. Its history accordingly exhibits the usual feature of all democratic societies—occasional bursts of patriotism, and splendid efforts followed by dejection, anarchy, and misrule. It is a stormy night illuminated by occasional flashes of lightning, never by the steady radiance of the morning sun.

One of the most glorious of these flashes is the victory of Kotzim, the first great achievement of John Sobieski.

" Kotzim is a strong castle, situated four leagues from Kamaniek, on a rocky projection which runs into the Dnieper, impregnable from the river, and surrounded on the other side by deep and rocky ravines. A bridge thrown over one of them united it to the intrenched camp where Hussein Pasha had posted his army. That camp, defended by ancient fieldworks, extended along the banks of the Dnieper, and was guarded on the side of Moldavia, the sole accessible quarter, by precipices cut in the solid rock, and impassable morasses. The art of the Ottomans had added to the natural strength of the position: the plain over which, after the example of the Romans, that military colony was intended to rule, was intersected to a great distance by canals and ditches, whose banks were strengthened by palisades. A powerful artillery defended all the avenues to the camp, and there reposed, under magnificent tents, the Turkish generalissimo and eighty thousand veterans, when they were suddenly startled by the sight of the Polish banners, which moved in splendid array round their intrenchments, and took up a position almost under the fire of their artillery.

" The spot was animating to the recollections of the Christian host. Fifty years before, James Sobieski had conquered a glorious peace under the walls of that very castle: and against its ramparts, after the disaster of the Kobilta, the power of the young Sultan Osman had dashed in vain. Now the sides were changed; the Turks held the intrenched camp, and the army of the son of James Sobieski filled the plain.

" The smaller force had now to make the assault: the larger army was intrenched behind ramparts better fortified, better armed with cannon, than those which Sultan Osman and his three hundred thousand Mussulmans sought in vain to wrest from the feeble army of Wladislaus. The Turks were now grown gray in victories, and the assailants were young troops, for the most part ill armed, assembled in haste, destitute of resources, magazines, or provisions—worn out with the fatigues and the privations of a winter campaign. Deep ditches, the rocky bed of torrents, precipitous walls of rock, composed the field of battle on which they were called on to combat an enemy reposing tranquilly under the laurels of victory, beneath sumptuous tents, and behind ramparts defended by an array of three hundred pieces of cannon. The night passed on the Polish side in mortal disquietude; the mind of the general, equally with the soldiers, was overwhelmed with anxiety. The enterprise which he had undertaken seemed above human strength; the army had no chance of safety but in victory, and there was too much reason to fear that treachery, or division in his own troops, would snatch it from his grasp, and deliver down his name with disgrace to posterity.

" Sobieski alone was inaccessible to fear. When the troops were drawn forth on the following morning, the Grand Hetman of Lithuania declared the attack desperate, and his resolution to retreat. ' Retreat,' cried the Polish hero, ' is impossible. We should only find a disgraceful death in the morasses with which we are surrounded, a few leagues from hence; better far to brave it at the foot of the enemy's intrenchments. But what ground is there for apprehension? Nothing disquiets me but what I hear from you. Your menaces are our only danger. I am confident you will not execute them. If Poland is to be effaced from the book of nations, you will not allow our children to exclaim, that if a Paz had not fled, they would not have wanted a country.' Vanquished by the magnanimity of Sobieski, and the cries of Sapieha and Radziwik, the Lithuanian chief promised not to desert his countrymen.

" Sobieski then ranged his faltering battalions in order of battle, and the Turks made preparations to receive behind their intrenchments the seemingly hopeless attack of the Christians. Their forces were ranged in a semicircle, and their forty field-pieces, advanced in front, battered in breach the palisades which were placed across the approaches to the Turkish camp. Kouski, the commander of the artillery, performed under the superior fire of the enemy prodigies of valour. The breaches were declared practicable in the evening; and when night came, the Christian forces of the two principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia deserted the camp of the Infidels, to range themselves under the standard of the Cross; a cheering omen, for troops never desert but to the side which they imagine will prove successful.

" The weather was dreadful; the snow fell in great quantities; the ranks were obstructed by its drifts. In the midst of that severe tempest, Sobieski kept his troops under arms the whole night. In the morning they were buried in the snow, exhausted by cold and suffering. Then he gave the signal of attack. ' Companions,' said he, in passing through the lines, his clothes, his hair, his mustaches covered with icicles, ' I deliver to you an enemy already half vanquished. You have suffered, the Turks are exhausted. The troops of Asia can never endure the hardships of the last twenty-four hours. The cold has conquered them to our hand. Whole troops of them are already sinking under their sufferings, while we, inured to the climate, are only animated by it to fresh exertions. It is for us to save the republic from shame and slavery. Soldiers of Poland! recollect that you fight for your country, and that Jesus Christ combats for you.'

" Sobieski had thrice heard mass since the rising of the sun. The day was the *fête* of St Martin of Tours. The chiefs founded great hopes on his

intercession: the priests, who had followed their masters to the field of battle, traversed the ranks, recounting the actions of that great apostle of the French, and all that they might expect from his known zeal for the faith. He was a Slavonian by birth. Could there be any doubt, then, that the Christians would triumph when his glory was on that day in so peculiar a manner interested in performing miracles in their favour?

"An accidental circumstance gave the highest appearance of truth to these ideas. The Grand Marshal, who had just completed his last reconnoissance of the enemy's lines, returned with his countenance illuminated by the presages of victory. 'My companions,' he exclaimed, 'in half-an-hour we shall be lodged under these gilded tents.' In fact, he had discovered that the point against which he intended to direct his principal attack was only defended by a few troops benumbed by the cold. He immediately made several feigned assaults to distract the attention of the enemy, and directed against the palisades, by which he intended to enter, the fire of a battery already erected. The soldiers immediately recollected that the preceding evening they had made the utmost efforts to draw the cannon beyond that point, but that a power apparently more than human had chained them to the spot, from whence now they easily beat down the obstacles to the army's advance, and cleared the road to victory. Who was so blind as not to see in that circumstance the miraculous intervention of Martin of Tours?

"At that moment the army knelt down to receive the benediction of Father Przeborowski, confessor of the Grand Hetman; and his prayer being concluded, Sobieski, dismounting from his horse, ordered his infantry to move forward to the assault of the newly opened breach in the palisades, he himself, sword in hand, directing the way. The armed valets followed rapidly in their footsteps. That courageous band were never afraid to tread the path of danger in the hope of plunder. In a moment the ditches were filled up and passed; with one bound the troops arrived at the foot of the rocks. The Grand Hetman, after that first success, had hardly time to remount on horseback, when, on the heights of the intrenched camp, were seen the standard of the cross and the eagle of Poland. Petrikowski and Denhoff, of the royal race of the Piasts, had first mounted the ramparts, and raised their ensigns. At this joyful sight, a hurra of triumph rose from the Polish ranks, and rent the heavens. The Turks were seized with consternation; they had been confounded at that sudden attack, made at a time when they imagined the severity of the weather had made the Christians renounce their perilous enterprise. Such was the confusion that, but for the extraordinary strength of the position, they could not have stood a moment. At this critical juncture, Hussein, deceived by a false attack of Czarnicki, hastened with his cavalry to the other side of the camp, and the spahis, conceiving that he was flying, speedily took to flight.

"But the Janizzaries were not yet vanquished. Innured to arms, they rapidly formed their ranks, and falling upon the valets, who had dispersed in search of plunder, easily put them to the sword. Fortunately, Sobieski had had time to employ his foot-soldiers in levelling the ground, and rendering accessible the approaches to the summits of the hills. The Polish cavalry came rushing in with a noise like thunder. The hussars, the cuirassiers, with burning torches affixed to their lances, scaled precipices which seemed hardly accessible to foot-soldiers. Inactive till that moment, Paz now roused his strength. Ever the rival of Sobieski, he rushed forward with his Lithuanian nobles in the midst of every danger, to endeavour to arrive first in the Ottoman camp. It was too late;—already the flaming lances of the Grand Hetman gleamed on the summits of the intrenchments, and, ever attentive to the duties of a commander, Sobieski was employed in re-forming the ranks of the assailants, disordered by the assault and their success, and preparing for a new battle in the midst of that city of tents, which, though surprised, seemed not subdued.

"But the astonishment and confusion of the besieged, the cries of the women shut up in the Harems, the thundering charges of the heavy squadrons clothed in steel invulnerable, and composed of impetuous young men, gave the Turks no time to recover from their consternation. It was no longer a battle, but a massacre. Demetrius and the Lithuanian met at the same time in the invaded camp. A cry of horror now rose from the Turkish ranks, and they rushed in crowds to the bridge of boats which crossed the Dnieper, and formed the sole communication between Kotzim and the fortified city of Kamaniek. In the struggle to reach this sole outlet from destruction, multitudes killed each other. But Sobieski's foresight had deprived the vanquished even of this last resource. His brother-in-law, Radzewil, had during the tumult glided unperceived through the bottom of the ravines, and at the critical moment made himself master of the bridge, and the heights which commanded it. The only resource of the fugitives was now to throw themselves into the waves. 20,000 men perished at that fatal point, either on the shores or in the half-congealed stream. Insatiable in carnage, the hussars led by Maziniki pursued them on horseback into the bed of the Dnieper, and sabred thousands when struggling in the stream. 40,000 dead bodies were found in the precincts of the camp. The water of the river for several leagues ran red with blood, and corpses were thrown up with every wave on its deserted shores.

"At the news of this extraordinary triumph, the Capitan Pasha, who was advancing with a fresh army to invade Poland, set fire to his camp, and hastened across the Danube. The Moldavians and Wallachians made their submission to the conqueror, and the Turks, recently so arrogant, began to tremble for their capital. Europe, electrified with these successes, returned thanks for the greatest victory gained for three centuries over the Infidels. Christendom quivered with joy, as if it had just escaped from ignominy and bondage."—Vol. ii. 130–153.

"But while Europe was awaiting the intelligence of the completion of the overthrow of the Osmanlis, desertion and flight had ruined the Polish army. Whole Palatinates had abandoned their colours. They were desirous to carry off in safety the spoils of the East, and to prepare for that new field of battle which the election of the King of Poland, who died at this juncture, presented. Sobieski remained almost alone on the banks of the Dnieper. At the moment when Wallachia and Moldavia were throwing themselves under the protection of the Polish crown, when the Capitan Pasha was flying to the foot of the Balkan, and Sobieski was dreaming of changing the face of the world, his army dissolved. The Turks, at this unexpected piece of fortune, recovered from their terror, and the rule of the Mussulmans was perpetuated for two centuries in Europe."—Vol. ii. 165.

This victory, and the subsequent dissolution of the army, so characteristic both of the glories and the inconstancy of Poland, great as it was, was eclipsed by the splendours of the deliverance of Vienna. The account of the previous election of this great man to the throne of Poland is singularly characteristic of Polish manners.

"The plain of Vola to the west of Warsaw had been the theatre, from the earliest times, of the popular elections. Already the impatient Pospolite covered that vast extent with its waves, like an army prepared to commence an assault on a fortified town. The innumerable piles of arms; the immense tables round which faction united their supporters; a thousand jousts with the javelin or the lance; a thousand squadrons engaged in mimic war; a thousand parties of palatines, governors of castles, and other dignified

authorities who traversed the ranks distributing exhortations, party songs, and largesses; a thousand cavalcades of gentlemen, who rode, according to custom, with their battle-axes by their sides, and discussed at the gallop the dearest interests of the republic; innumerable quarrels, originating in drunkenness, and terminating in blood: such were the scenes of tumult, amusement, and war—a faithful mirror of Poland—which, as far as the eye could reach, filled the plain.

"The arena was closed in by a vast circle of tents, which embraced, as in an immense girdle, the plain of Vola, the shores of the Vistula, and the spires of Warsaw. The horizon seemed bounded by a range of snowy mountains, of which the summits were portrayed in the hazy distance by their dazzling whiteness. Their camp formed another city, with its markets, its gardens, its hotels, and its monuments. There the great displayed their Oriental magnificence; the nobles, the palatines, vied with each other in the splendour of their horses and equipage; and the stranger who beheld for the first time that luxury, worthy of the last and greatest of the Nomade peoples, was never weary of admiring the immense hotels, the porticoes, the colonnades, the galleries of painted or gilded stuffs, the castles of cotton and silk, with their drawbridges, towers, and ditches. Thanks to the recent victory, a great part of these riches had been taken from the Turks. Judging from the multitude of stalls, kitchens, baths, audience chambers, the elegance of the Oriental architecture, the taste of the designs, the profusion of gilded crosses, domes, and pagodas, you would imagine that the seraglio of some Eastern sultan had been transported by enchantment to the banks of the Vistula. Victory had accomplished this prodigy—these were the tents of Mahomet IV., taken at the battle of Kotzim; and though Sobieski was absent, his triumphant arms surmounted the crescent of Mahomet.

"The Lithuanians were encamped on the opposite shores of the Vistula; and their Grand Hetman, Michel Paz, had brought up his whole force to dictate laws, as it were, to the Polish crown. Sobieski had previously occupied the bridge over the river by a regiment of hussars, upon which the Lithuanians seized every house in the city which wealth could command. These hostile dispositions were too significant of frightful disorders. War soon ensued, in the midst of the rejoicings, between Lithuania and Poland. Every time the opposite factions met, their strife terminated in bloodshed. The hostilities extended even to the bloody game of the Klopiches, which was played by a confederation of the boys in the city, or of pages and valets, who amused themselves by forming troops, electing a marshal, choosing a field of battle, and fighting there to the last extremity. On this occasion they were divided into corps of Lithuanians and Poles, who hoisted the colours of their respective states, got firearms to imitate more completely the habits of the equestrian order, and disturbed the plain everywhere by their marches, or terrified it by their assaults. Their shock desolated the plain; the villages were in flames; the savage huts of which the suburbs of Warsaw were then composed, were incessantly invaded and sacked in that terrible sport, invented apparently to inure the youth to civil war, and extend even to the slaves the enjoyments of anarchy.

"On the day of the elections, the three orders mounted on horseback. The princes, the palatines, the bishops, the prelates, proceeded towards the plain of Vola, surrounded by 80,000 mounted citizens, any one of whom might, at the expiry of a few hours, find himself King of Poland. They all bore in their countenances, even under the livery or banners of a master, the pride arising from that ruinous privilege. The European dress nowhere appeared on that solemn occasion. The children of the desert strove to hide the furs and skins in which they were clothed under chains of gold and the glitter of jewels. Their bonnets were composed of panther skin, plumes of eagles or herons surmounted them; on their front were the most splendid precious stones. Their robes of sable or ermine were bound with velvet or

silver; their girdle studded with jewels; over all their furs were suspended chains of diamonds. One hand of each nobleman was without a glove; on it was the splendid ring on which the arms of his family were engraved—the mark, as in ancient Rome, of the equestrian order. A new proof of this intimate connection between the race, the customs, and the traditions of the northern tribes, and the founders of the Eternal City.

"But nothing in this rivalry of magnificence could equal the splendour of their arms. Double poniards, double scimitars, set with brilliants; bucklers of costly workmanship, battle-axes enriched in silver, and glittering with emeralds and sapphires; bows and arrows richly gilt, which were borne at festivals, in remembrance of the ancient customs of the country, were to be seen on every side. The horses shared in this melange of barbarism and refinement; sometimes cased in iron, at others decorated with the richest colours, they bent under the weight of the sabres, the lances, and javelins by which the senatorial order marked their rank. The bishops were distinguished by their gray or green hats, and yellow or red pantaloons, magnificently embroidered with divers colours. Often they laid aside their pastoral habits, and signalised their address as young cavaliers, by the beauty of their arms, and the management of their horses. In that crowd of the equestrian order, there was no gentleman so humble as not to try to rival this magnificence. Many carried, in furs and arms, their whole fortunes on their backs. Numbers had sold their votes to some of the candidates, for the vanity of appearing with some additional ornament before their fellow-citizens. And the people, whose dazzled eyes beheld all this magnificence, were almost without clothing; their long beards, naked legs, and filth, indicated, even more strongly than their pale visages and dejected air, all the miseries of servitude."—Vol. ii. 190–197.

The achievement which has immortalised the name of John Sobieski is the deliverance of Vienna in 1683. Of this glorious achievement M. Salvandy gives the following interesting account:—

"After a siege of eight months, and open trenches for sixty days, Vienna was reduced to the last extremity. Famine, disease, and the sword, had cut off two-thirds of its garrison; and the inhabitants, depressed by incessant toil for the last six months, and sickened by long-deferred hope, were given up to despair. Many breaches were made in the walls; the massy bastions were crumbling in ruins, and intrenchments thrown up in haste in the streets formed the last resource of the German capital. Stahremborg, the governor, had announced the necessity of surrendering if not relieved in three days; and every night signals of distress from the summits of the steeples, announced the extremities to which they were reduced.

"One evening, the sentinel who was on the watch at the top of the steeple of St Stephen's, perceived a blazing flame on the summits of the Calemberg; soon after an army was seen preparing to descend the ridge. Every telescope was now turned in that direction, and from the brilliancy of their lances, and the splendour of their banners, it was easy to see that it was the Hussars of Poland, so redoubtable to the Osmanlis, who were approaching. The Turks were immediately to be seen dividing their vast host into two, one destined to oppose this new enemy, and one to continue the assaults on the besieged. At the sight of the terrible conflict which was approaching, the women and children flocked to the churches, while Stahremborg led forth all that remained of the men to the breaches.

"The Duke of Lorraine set forth with a few horsemen to join the King of Poland, and learn the art of war, as he expressed it, under so great a master. The two illustrious commanders soon concerted a plan of operations, and

Sobieski encamped on the Danube, with all his forces united to the troops of the empire. It was with tears of joy that the sovereigns, generals, and the soldiers of the Imperialists, received the illustrious chief whom heaven had sent to their relief. Before his arrival discord reigned in their camp, but all now yielded obedience to the Polish hero.

"The Duke of Lorraine had previously constructed at Tuln, six leagues below Vienna, a triple bridge, which Kara Mustapha, the Turkish commander, allowed to be formed without opposition. The German Electors nevertheless hesitated to cross the river; the severity of the weather, long rains, and roads now almost impassable, augmented their alarms. But the King of Poland was a stranger alike to hesitation as fear: the state of Vienna would admit of no delay. The last despatch of Stahremborg was simply in these words: 'There is no time to lose.'—'There is no reverse to fear,' exclaimed Sobieski; 'the general who at the head of 300,000 men could allow that bridge to be constructed in his teeth, cannot fail to be defeated.'

"On the following day the liberators of Christendom passed in review before their allies. The Poles marched first; the spectators were astonished at the magnificence of their arms, the splendour of the dresses, and the beauty of the horses. The infantry was less brilliant; one regiment in particular, by its battered appearance, hurt the pride of the monarch—'Look well at those brave men,' said he to the Imperialists, 'it is an invincible battalion, who have sworn never to renew their clothing, till they are arrayed in the spoils of the Turks.' These words were repeated to the regiments; if they did not, says the annalist, clothe them, they encircled every man with a cuirass.

"The Christian army, when all assembled, amounted to 70,000 men, of whom only 30,000 were infantry. Of these the Poles were 18,000. The principal disquietude of the king was on account of the absence of the Cossacks, whom Mynzwicki had promised to bring up to his assistance. He well knew what admirable scouts they formed; the Tartars had always found in them their most formidable enemies. Long experience in the Turkish wars had rendered them exceedingly skilful in this species of warfare; no other force was equal to them in seizing prisoners and gaining intelligence. They were promised ten crowns for every man they brought in after this manner: they led their captives to the tent of their king, where they got their promised reward, and went away saying, 'John, I have touched my money, God will repay you.' Bereaved of these faithful assistants, the king was compelled to expose his hussars in exploring the dangerous defiles in which the army was about to engage. The Imperialists, who could not comprehend his attachment to that undisciplined militia, were astonished to hear him incessantly exclaiming, 'Oh, Mynzwicki! Oh, Mynzwicki!'"

A rocky chain, full of narrow and precipitous ravines, of woods and rocks, called the Calemberg in modern times, the Mons Ætius of the Romans, separated the two armies: the cause of Christendom from that of Mahomet. It was necessary to scale that formidable barrier; for the mountains advanced with a rocky front into the middle of the Danube. Fortunately the negligence of the Turks had omitted to fortify these posts, where a few battalions might have arrested the Polish army.

"Nothing could equal the confidence of the Turks but the disquietude of the Imperialists. Such was the terror impressed by the vast host of the Mussulmans, that at the first cry of 'Allah!' whole battalions took to flight. Many thousand peasants were incessantly engaged in levelling the roads

over the mountains, or cutting through the forest. The foot-soldiers dragged the artillery with their arms, and were compelled to abandon the heavier pieces. Chiefs and soldiers carried each his own provisions: the leaves of the oak formed the sole subsistence of the horses. Some scouts reached the summits of the ridge long before the remainder of the army, and from thence beheld the countless myriads of the Turkish tents extending to the walls of Vienna. Terrified at the sight, they returned in dismay, and a contagious panic began to spread through the army. The king had need, to reassure his troops, of all the security of his countenance, the gaiety of his discourse, and the remembrance of the multitudes of the Infidels whom he had dispersed in his life. The Janissaries of his guard, who surrounded him on the march, were so many living monuments of his victories, and every one was astonished that he ventured to attack the Mussulmans with such an escort. He offered to send them to the rear, or even to give them a safe conduct to the Turkish camp; but they all answered with tears in their eyes, that they would live and die with him. His heroism subjugated alike Infidels and Christians, chiefs and soldiers.

"At length, on Saturday, September 11th, the army encamped, at eleven o'clock in the forenoon, on the sterile and inhospitable summit of the Calemberg, and occupied the convent of Camaldoli and the old castle of Leopoldsburg. Far beneath extended the vast and uneven plain of Austria, its smoking capital, the gilded tents, and countless host of the besiegers; while at the foot of the ridge, where the mountains sink into the plain, the forests and ravines were occupied by the advanced guards, prepared to dispute the passage of the army."

There it was that they lighted the fires which spread joy and hope through every heart at Vienna.

"Trusting in their vast multitudes, the Turks pressed the assault of Vienna on the one side, while on the other they faced the liberating army. The Turkish vizier counted in his ranks four Christian princes and as many Tartar chiefs. All the nobles of Germany and Poland were on the other side: Sobieski was at once the Agamemnon and Achilles of that splendid host.

"The young Eugene of Savoy made his first essay in arms, by bringing to Sobieski the intelligence that the engagement was commenced between the advanced guards at the foot of the ridge. The Christians immediately descended the mountains in five columns like torrents, but marching in the finest order; the leading divisions halted at every hundred paces to give time to those behind, who were retarded by the difficulties of the descent, to join them. A rude parapet, hastily erected by the Turks to bar the five *débouchés* of the roads into the plain, was forced after a short combat. At every ravine, the Christians experienced fresh obstacles to surmount; the spahis dismounted to contest the rocky ascents, and, speedily regaining their horses when they were forced, fell back in haste to the next positions which were to be defended. But the Mussulmans, deficient in infantry, could not withstand the steady advance and solid masses of the Germans, and the Christians everywhere gained ground. Animated by the continued advance of their deliverers, the garrison of Vienna performed miracles on the breach; and Kara Mustapha, who long hesitated which battle he should join, resolved to meet the avenging squadrons of the Polish king.

"By two o'clock the ravines were cleared, and the allies drawn up in the plain. Sobieski ordered the Duke of Lorraine to halt, to give time for the Poles, who had been retarded by a circuitous march, to join the army. At eleven they appeared, and took their post on the right. The Imperial eagles saluted the squadrons of gilded cuirasses with cries of 'Long live King John Sobieski!' and the cry, repeated along the Christian line, startled the Mussulman force.

"Sobieski charged in the centre, and directed his attack against the scarlet tent of the Sultan, surrounded by his faithful squadrons; distinguished by his splendid plume, his bow, and quiver of gold, which hung on his shoulder—most of all by the enthusiasm which his presence everywhere excited. He advanced exclaiming, 'Non nobis, Domine, sed tibi sit gloria!' The Tartars and the spahis fled when they heard the name of the Polish hero repeated from one end to the other of the Ottoman lines. 'By Allah!' exclaimed Sultan Gieray, 'the King is with them!' At this moment the moon was eclipsed, and the Mahommedans beheld with dread the crescent waning in the heavens.

"At the same time the hussars of Prince Alexander, who formed the leading column, broke into a charge amidst the national cry, 'God defend Poland!' The remaining squadrons, led by all that was noblest and bravest in the country, resplendent in arms, buoyant in courage, followed at the gallop. They cleared, without drawing bridle, a ravine at which infantry might have paused, and charged furiously up the opposite bank. With such vehemence did they enter the enemy's ranks, that they fairly cut the army in two,—justifying thus the celebrated saying of that haughty nobility to one of their kings, that with their aid no reverse was irreparable; and that if the heaven itself were to fall, they would support it on the points of their lances.

"The shock was so violent, that almost all the lances were splintered. The Pashas of Aleppo and of Silistria were slain on the spot; four other pashas fell under the sabres of Jablonowski. At the same time Charles of Lorraine had routed the force of the principalities, and threatened the Ottoman camp. Kara Mustapha fell at once from the heights of confidence to the depths of despair. Can you not aid me?' said he to the Kara of the Crimea. 'I know the King of Poland,' said he; 'and I tell you that, with such an enemy, we have no chance of safety but in flight.' Mustapha in vain strove to rally his troops; all, seized with a sudden panic, fled, not daring to lift their eyes to heaven. The cause of Europe, of Christianity, of civilisation, had prevailed. The wave of the Mussulman power had retired, and retired never to return.

"At six in the evening, Sobieski entered the Turkish camp. He arrived first at the quarters of the vizier. At the entrance of that vast enclosure a slave met him, and presented him with the charger and golden bridle of Mustapha. He took the bridle, and ordered one of his followers to set out in haste for the Queen of Poland, and say that he who owned that bridle was vanquished; then planted his standard in the midst of that armed caravansery of all the nations of the East, and ordered Charles of Lorraine to drive the besiegers from the trenches before Vienna. It was already done; the Janissaries had left their posts on the approach of night, and, after sixty days of open trenches, the imperial city was delivered.

"On the following morning the magnitude of the victory appeared. One hundred and twenty thousand tents were still standing, notwithstanding the attempts at their destruction by the Turks: the innumerable multitude of the Orientals had disappeared; but their spoils, their horses, their camels, their splendour loaded the ground. The King, at ten, approached Vienna. He passed through the breach, whereby, but for him, on that day the Turks would have found an entrance. At his approach, the streets were cleared of their ruins; and the people, issuing from their cellars and their tottering houses, gazed with enthusiasm on their deliverer. They followed him to the church of the Augustins, where, as the clergy had not arrived, the King himself chanted *Te Deum*. This service was soon after performed with still greater solemnity in the Cathedral of St Stephen; the King joined with his face to the ground. It was there that the priest used the inspired words—'There was a man sent from heaven, and his name was John.'"—Vol. iii. 50, 101.

During this memorable campaign, Sobieski, who through life was a tender and affectionate husband, wrote daily to his wife. At the age of fifty-four he had lost nothing of the tenderness and enthusiasm of his earlier years. In one of them he says—"I read all your letters, my dear and incomparable Maria, thrice over; once when I receive them, once when I retire to my tent and am alone with my love, once when I sit down to answer them. I beseech you, my beloved, do not rise so early; no health can stand such exertions: if you do, you will destroy my health, and, what is worse, injure your own, which is my sole consolation in this world." When offered the throne of Poland, it was at first proposed that he should divorce his wife, and marry the widow of the late king, to reconcile the contending faction. "I am not yet a king," said he, "and have contracted no obligations toward the nation. Let them resume their gift; I disdain the throne if it is to be purchased at such a price."

It is superfluous, after these quotations, to say anything of the merits of M. Salvandy's work. It unites, in a rare degree, the qualities of philosophical thought with brilliant and vivid description; and is one of the numerous instances of the vast superiority of the modern French Historians to most of those of whom Great Britain, in the present age, can boast. If anything could reconcile us to the march of Revolution, it is the vast development of talent which has taken place in France since her political convulsions commenced, and the new field which their genius has opened up in historical disquisitions. On comparing the historians of the two countries since the Restoration, it seems as if they were teeming with the luxuriance of a virgin soil, while we are sinking under the sterility of exhausted cultivation. Steadily resisting, as we trust we shall ever do, the fatal march of French innovation, we shall yet never be found wanting in yielding due praise to the splendour of French talent; and in the turn which political speculation has recently taken among the most elevated minds in their active metropolis, we are not without hopes that the first rays of the dawn are to be discerned which is destined to compensate to mankind for the darkness and blood of the Revolution.

THE YEAR OF REVOLUTIONS

BLACKWOOD'S MAGAZINE, JAN. 1849]

THAT God will visit the sins of the fathers upon the children was proclaimed to the Israelites amidst the thunders of Mount Sinai, and has been felt by every succeeding generation of men. But it is not now upon the third or the fourth generation that the punishment of transgression falls; it is felt in its full bitterness by the transgressors themselves. The extension of knowledge, the diffusion of education, the art of printing, the increased rapidity of travelling, the long duration of peace in consequence of the exhaustion of former wars, have so accelerated the march of events, that what was slowly effected in former times, during several successive generations, by the gradual development of national passions, is now at once brought to maturity by the fervent spirit which is generally awakened, and the vehement passions which are everywhere brought into action.

Everything now goes on at the gallop. There is a railway speed in the stirring of the mind, not less than in the movement of the bodies of men. The social and political passions have acquired such intensity, and been so widely diffused, that their inevitable results are almost immediately produced. The period of seed-time and harvest has become as short in political as it is in agricultural labour. A single year brings its appropriate fruits to maturity in the moral as in the physical world. Eighty years elapsed in Rome from the time when the political passions were first stirred by Tiberius Gracchus, before its unruly citizens were finally subdued by the art, or decimated by the cruelty of Octavius. England underwent six years of civil war and suffering,

before the ambition and madness of the Long Parliament were expelled by the purge of Pride, or crushed by the sword of Cromwell: twelve years elapsed between the convocation of the States-General in 1789, and the extinction of the license of the French Revolution by the arm of Napoleon. But, on this occasion, in one year, all, in the mean time at least, has been accomplished. Ere the leaves, which unfolded in spring amidst the overthrow of thrones, and the transports of revolutionists over the world, had fallen in autumn, the passions which had convulsed mankind were crushed for the time, and the triumphs of democracy were arrested. A terrible reaction had set in; experience of suffering had done its work; and swift as the shades of night before the rays of the ascending sun, had disappeared the ferment of revolution before the aroused indignation of the uncorrupted part of mankind. The same passions may again arise; the same delusions again spread, as sin springs up afresh in successive generations of men; but we know the result. They will, like the ways of the unrighteous, be again crushed.

So rapid was the succession of revolutions, when the tempest assailed the world last spring, that no human power seemed capable of arresting it; and the thoughtful looked on in mournful and impotent silence, as they would have done on the decay of nature or the ruin of the world. The Pope began the career of innovation: decrees of change issued from the Vatican; and men beheld with amazement the prodigy of the Supreme Pontiff—the head of the Unchangeable Church—standing forth as the leader of political reform. Naples quickly caught the flame: a Sicilian revolution threatened to sever one-half of his dominions from the Neapolitan Bourbon; and internal revolt seemed to render his authority merely nominal in his own metropolis. Paris, the cradle in every age of new ideas, and the centre of revolutionary action, next felt the shock: a reform banquet was prepared as the signal for assembling the democratic forces; the National Guard, as usual, failed at the decisive moment; the King of the Barricades quailed before the power which had created him; the Orleans dynasty was overthrown, and France delivered over to the dreams of the Socialists and the ferocity of the Red Repub-

licans. Prussia soon shared the madness: the population of Berlin, all trained to arms, according to the custom of that country, rose against the government; the King had not energy enough to permit his faithful troops to act with the vigour requisite to uphold the throne against such assailants, and the monarchy of Frederick the Great was overthrown. Austria, even, could not withstand the contagion: neither its proud nobility, nor its light-hearted sensual people, nor its colossal army, nor its centuries of glory, could maintain the throne in its moment of peril. The Emperor was weak, the citizens of Vienna were infatuated; and an insurrection, headed by the boys at the university and the haberdashers' apprentices in the streets, overturned the imperial government, and drove the Emperor to seek refuge in the Tyrol. All Germany caught the flame: the dreams of a few hot-headed enthusiasts and professors seemed to prevail alike over the dictates of wisdom and the lessons of experience; and, amidst the transports of millions, the chimera of German unity seemed about to be realised by the sacrifice of all its means of independence.

The balance of power in Europe appeared irrevocably destroyed by the breaking up of its central and most important powers; and England, in the midst of the general ruin, seemed rocking to its foundation. The Chartists were in raptures, the Irish rebels in ecstasy; threatening meetings were held in every town in Great Britain; armed clubs were organised in the whole south and west of Ireland; revolution was openly talked of in both islands, and the close of harvest announced as the time when the British empire was to be broken up, and Anglian and Hibernian republics established, in close alliance with the great parent democracy in France. Amidst such extraordinary and unprecedented convulsions, it was with difficulty that a few courageous or far-seeing minds preserved their equilibrium; and even those who were least disposed to despair of the fortunes of the species, could see no end to the succession of disasters with which the world was menaced but in a great exertion of the renovating powers of nature, similar to that predicted, in a similar catastrophe, for the material world, by the imagination of the poet :—

"Roll on, ye stars! exult in youthful prime,
Mark with bright curves the printless steps of Time!
Near and more near your beaming cars approach,
And lessening orbs on lessening orbs encroach.
Flowers of the sky! ye, too, to fate must yield,
Frail as your silken sisters of the field;
Star after star from heaven's high arch shall rush,
Suns sink on suns, and systems systems crush;
Headlong, extinct, to one dark centre fall,
And Dark, and Night, and Chaos, mingle all;
Till, o'er the wreck, emerging from the storm,
Immortal Nature lifts her changeful form,
Mounts from her funeral pyre on wings of flame,
And soars and shines, another and the same." *

But the destiny of man, not less than that of the material world, is balanced action and reaction, not restoration from ruin. Order is maintained in a way which the imagination of the poet could not have conceived. Even in the brief space which has elapsed since the convulsions began in Italy in January last, the reality and ceaseless action of the preserving laws of nature have been demonstrated. The balance is preserved in social life by contending passions and interests, as in the physical world by opposite forces, under circumstances when, to all human appearance, remedy is impossible and hope extinguished. The orbit of nations is traced out by the wisdom of Providence not less clearly than that of the planets; there are centripetal and centrifugal forces in the moral as well as in the material world. As much as the vehement passions, the selfish desires, the inexperienced zeal, the expanding energy, the rapacious indigence, the mingled virtues and vices of man, lead at stated periods to the explosions of revolution,—do the desire of tranquillity, the interests of property, the horror at cruelty, the lessons of experience, the force of religion, the bitterness of suffering, reinduce the desire of order, and restore the influence of its organ, government. If we contemplate the awful force of the expansive powers which, issuing from the great mass of central heat, find vent in the fiery channels of the volcano, and have so often rent asunder the solid crust of the earth, we may well tremble to think that we stand suspended, as it were, over such an abyss, and that at no great distance beneath our feet the elements of

* Darwin, *Botanic Garden.*

universal conflagration are to be found.* But, strong as are the expansive powers of nature, the coercive are still stronger. The ocean exists to bridle with its weight the fiery gulf; the arch of the earth has been solidly constructed by its Divine architect; and the only traces we now discover, in most parts of this globe, of the yet raging war of the elements, are the twisted strata, which mark, as it were, the former writhings of matter in the terrible grasp of its tormentors; or the splintered pinnacles of mountains, which add beauty to the landscape; or the smiling plains, which bring happiness to the abodes of man. It is the same in the moral world. Action and reaction are the law of mind as well as matter, and the equilibrium of social life is preserved by the opposite tendency of the interests which are brought into collision, and the counteracting force of the passions which are successively awakened by the very convulsions which seem to menace society with dissolution.

A year has not elapsed since the revolutionary earthquake began to heave in Italy—since the volcano burst forth in Paris; and how marvellous is the change which has already taken place in the state of Europe! The star of Austria, at first defeated, and apparently about to be extinguished in Italy, is again in the ascendant. Refluent from the Mincio to the Ticino, her armies have again entered Milan; the revolutionary usurpation of Charles Emanuel has been checked almost as soon as it commenced; and the insurgent rabble of Lombardy and Tuscany has fled, as it was wont, before the bayonets of Germany. Radetzky has extinguished revolution in northern Italy. If it still lingers in the south of the Peninsula, it is only because the strange and tortuous policy of France and England has interfered to arrest the victorious arms of Naples on the Sicilian shores. Paris has been the theatre of a dreadful struggle, blood has flowed in torrents in its streets, slaughter unheard-of stained its pavements; but order has in the end prevailed over anarchy. A dynasty has been subverted, but the Red Republicans have been defeated; more generals have perished in a conflict of three days than at Waterloo; but the Faubourg St Antoine has been subdued, the Socialists have been overthrown, the

* "Thirty-five miles below the surface of the earth, the central heat is everywhere so great, that granite itself is held in fusion."—HUMBOLDT, *Cosmos*, i. 273.

state of siege has been proclaimed; and, amidst universal suffering, anguish, and woe, with three hundred thousand persons out of employment in Paris, and a deficit of £12,000,000 in the income of the year, the dreams of equality have disappeared in the reality of military despotism. It is immaterial whether the head of the government is called a president, a dictator, or an emperor—whether the civic crown is worn by a Napoleon or a Cavaignac—in either case the ascendant of the army is established, and France, after a brief struggle for a constitutional monarchy, has terminated, like ancient Rome, in an elective military despotism.

Frankfort has been disgraced by frightful atrocities. The chief seat of German unity and freedom has been stained by cruelties which find a parallel only in the inhuman usages of the American savages; but the terrible lesson has not been read in vain. It produced a reaction over the world; it opened the eyes of men to the real tendency and abominable iniquity of the votaries of revolution in Germany; and to the sufferings of the martyrs of revolutionary tortures on the banks of the Maine, the subsequent overthrow of anarchy in Vienna and Berlin is in a great degree to be ascribed. They roused the vacillating cabinets of Austria and Prussia—they sharpened the swords of Windischgratz and Jellachich—they nerved the souls and strengthened the arms of Brandenberg and Wrangel—they awakened anew the chord of honour and loyalty in the Fatherland. The national airs have been again heard in Berlin; Vienna has been regained after a desperate conflict; the state of siege has been proclaimed in both capitals; and order re-established in both monarchies, amidst an amount of private suffering and general misery—the necessary result of revolutions—which absolutely sickens the heart to contemplate. England has emerged comparatively unscathed from the strife; her time-honoured institutions have been preserved, her monarchy saved amidst the crash of nations. Queen Victoria is still upon the throne; our mixed constitution is intact; the dreams of the Chartists have been dispelled; the rebellion of the Irish rendered ridiculous; the loyalty of the great body of the people in Great Britain made manifest. The period of immediate danger is over; for the attack of the

populace is like the spring of a wild beast—if the first onset fails, the savage animal slinks away into its den. General suffering indeed prevails, industry languishes, credit is all but destroyed, a woful deficiency of exports has taken place —but that is the inevitable result of popular commotions; and we are suffering, in part at least, under the effects of the insanity of nations less free and more inexperienced than ourselves. Though last not least in the political lessons of this marvellous year, the papal government has been subverted—a second Rienzi has appeared in Rome; and the Supreme Pontiff, *who began the movement*, now a fugitive from his dominions, has exhibited a memorable warning to future ages of the peril of commencing reforms in high places, and the impossibility of reconciling the Roman Catholic religion with political innovation.

But let it not be imagined that, because the immediate danger is over, and because military power has, after a fierce struggle, prevailed in the principal capitals of Europe, that therefore the ultimate peril is past, and that men have only to sit down, under the shadow of their fig-tree, to cultivate the arts and enjoy the blessings of peace. Such is not the destiny of man in any, least of all in a revolutionary age. We are rather on the verge of an era similar to that deplored by the poet :—

> " Bella per Emathios plusquam civilia campos,
> Jusque datum sceleri canimus, populumque potentem
> In sua victrici conversum viscera dextrâ;
> Cognatasque acies; et rupto fœdera regni
> Certatum totis concussi viribus orbis,
> In commune nefas."*

Who can tell the immeasurable extent of misery and wretchedness, of destruction of property among the rich, and ruin of industry among the poor, that must take place before the fierce passions, now so generally awakened, are allayed—before the visions of a virtuous republic by Lamartine, or the dreams of communism by Louis Blanc and Ledru-Rollin, or the insane ideas of the Frankfort enthusiasts, have ceased to move mankind? The fire they have let loose will burn fiercely for centuries; it will alter the destiny of nations for ages; it will neither be quenched, like ordinary flames, by water, nor subdued, like the Greek

* Lucan, i. 1-6.

fire, by vinegar: blood alone will extinguish its fury. The coming convulsions may well be prefigured from the past, as they have been recently drawn by the hand of a master: —"All around us, the world is convulsed by the agonies of great nations; governments, which lately seemed likely to stand during ages, have been on a sudden shaken and overthrown. The proudest capitals of Western Europe have streamed with civil blood. All evil passions—the thirst of gain and the thirst of vengeance—the antipathy of class to class, of race to race—have broken loose from the control of divine and human laws. Fear and anxiety have clouded the faces, and depressed the hearts of millions; trade has been suspended, and industry paralysed; the rich have become poor, and the poor poorer. Doctrines hostile to all sciences, to all arts, to all industry, to all domestic charity—doctrines which, if carried into effect, would in thirty years undo all that thirty centuries have done for mankind, and would make the fairest provinces of France or Germany as savage as Guiana or Patagonia—have been avowed from the tribune, and defended by the sword. Europe has been threatened with subjugation by barbarians, compared with whom the barbarians who marched under Attila or Alboin were enlightened and humane. The truest friends of the people have with deep sorrow owned, that interests more precious than any political privileges were in jeopardy, and that it might be necessary to sacrifice even liberty to save civilisation."*

It is now just a year since Mr Cobden announced, to an admiring and believing audience at Manchester, that the age of warfare had ceased; that the contests of nations had passed, like the age of the mastodon and the mammoth; that the steam-engine had caused the arms to drop from their hands, and the interests of free trade extinguished the rivalries of nations; and that nothing now remained but to sell our ships of war, disband our troops, cut twenty millions off our taxation, and set ourselves unanimously to the great work of cheapening everything, and underselling foreign competitors in the market of the world. Scarcely were the words spoken, when conflicts more dire, battles more bloody, dissensions more inextinguishable than had ever arisen from

* Macaulay's *History of England*, vol. ii. p. 669.

the rivalry of kings, or the ambition of ministers, broke out in almost every country of Europe. The social supplanted the national passions. Within the bosom of society itself, the volcano had burst forth. It was no longer general that was matched against general, as in the wars of Marlborough, nor nation that rose up against nation, as in those of Napoleon. The desire of robbery, the love of dominion, the lust of conquest, the passion for plunder, were directed to domestic acquisitions. Human iniquity reappeared in worse, because less suspected and more delusive colours. Robbery assumed the guise of philanthropy; spoliation was attempted, under colour of law; plunder was systematically set about, by means of legislative enactments. Revolution resumed its old policy—that of rousing the passions by the language of virtue, and directing them to the purposes of vice. The original devil was expelled; but straightway he returned with seven other devils, and the last state of the man was worse than the first. Society was armed against itself; the devastating passions burned in its own bosom; class rose against class, race against race, interest against interest. Capital fancied its interest was to be promoted by grinding down labour; labour, that its rights extended to the spoliation of capital. A more attractive object than the reduction of a city, or the conquest of a province, was presented to indigent cupidity. Easier conquests than over rival industry were anticipated by moneyed selfishness. The spoliation of the rich at their own door—the division of the property of which they were jealous, became the dream of popular ambition; the beating down of their own labourers by free trade, the forcible reduction of prices by a contraction of the currency—the great object of the commercial aristocracy. War reassumed its pristine ferocity. In the nineteenth century, the ruthless maxim, *Væ victis!* became the war-cry on both sides in the terrible civil war which burst forth in an age of general philanthropy. It may be conceived what passions must have been awakened, what terrors inspired, what indignation aroused, by such projects. But though we have seen the commencement of the *era of social conflicts*, is there any man now alive who is likely to see its end?

Experience has now completely demonstrated the wisdom

of the Allied Powers, who placed the lawful monarchs of France on the throne in 1815, and the enormous error of the Liberal party in France, which conspired with the Republicans to overthrow the Bourbon dynasty in 1830. That fatal step has bequeathed a host of evils to Europe: it has loosened the authority of government in all countries; it has put the very existence of freedom in peril by the enormity of the calamities which it has brought in its train. All parties in France are now agreed that the period of the Restoration was the happiest, and the least corrupted, that has been known since the first Revolution. The Republicans of the present day tell us, with a sigh, that the average budgets of the three last years of Charles X. were 900,000,000 francs, (£36,000,000;) that the expenditure was raised by Louis Philippe at once to 1500,000,000 francs, (£60,000,000;) and that under the Republic it will exceed 1800,000,000 francs, (£72,000,000.) There can be no doubt of the fact; and there can be as little, that if the Red Republicans had succeeded in the insurrection of June last, the annual expenditure would have increased to £100,000,000—or rather, a universal spoliation of property would have ensued. Louis Blanc has given the world, in his powerful historical work, a graphic picture of the universal corruption, selfishness, and immorality, in public and private life, which pervaded France during the reign of Louis Philippe.* Though drawn by the hand of a partisan, there can be no doubt that the picture is too faithful in most of its details, and exhibits an awful proof of the effects of a successful revolution. But the misery which Louis Blanc has so ably depicted, the corruptions he has brought to light, under the revolutionary monarchy, have been multiplied fourfold by those which have prevailed during the last year in the republic established by Louis Blanc himself!

Paris, ever since the suppression of the great insurrection in June last, has been in such a state, that it is the most utter mockery to call it freedom. In truth, it is nothing but the most unmitigated military despotism. A huge statue of Liberty is placed in the National Assembly; but at every six paces bayonets are to be seen, to remind the bystanders of the rule of the sword. "Liberté, Egalité,

* Louis Blanc, *Histoire de Dix Ans de Louis Philippe*, iii. 321 *et seq.*

Fraternité," meet the eye at every turn in the streets; but the Champs Elysées, the Place de Grève, the Carrousel, and Place Vendôme, are crowded with soldiers; and the Champ de Mars is white with tents, to cover part of the 40,000 regular troops which form the ordinary garrison of Paris. Universal freedom of discussion has been proclaimed by the constitution; but dozens of journals have been suppressed by the authority of the dictator; and imprisonment notoriously hangs over the head of every one who indulges in the freedom of discussion, which in England and America is universal. The state of siege has been raised, after having continued four months; but the military preparations for *another siege* continue with unabated vigour on both sides. The constitution has been adopted by a great majority in the Assembly; but the forts are all armed, and prepared to rain down the tempest of death on the devoted city. Universal suffrage is established; but menacing crowds are in the streets, threatening any one who votes against their favourite candidates. The Faubourg St Antoine, during the late election, was in a frightful state of agitation; infantry, cavalry, and artillery, were traversing the streets in all directions; and conflicts not less bloody than those of June last were anticipated in the struggle for the Presidency, and prevented only by the presence of *ninety thousand soldiers* in the capital: a force greater than that which fought on either side at Austerlitz or Jena. It is evident that republican institutions, in such a state of society, are a mere name; and that supreme despotic power is really invested in France, as in ancient Rome under the emperors, in the nominee of a victorious body of soldiery. The Prætorian guards will dispose of the French as they did of the Roman diadem; and ere long, gratuities to the troops will perhaps be the passport to power in Paris, as they were in the Eternal City.

Nor have the social evils, which in France have followed in the wake of successful revolution, been less deplorable than the entire destruction of the rights of freemen and security of property which has ensued. To show that this statement is not overcharged, we extract from a noted Liberal journal of Paris, *La Reforme*, of November 17, 1848, the following statement:—

"Property, manufactures, and commerce are utterly destroyed in Paris. Of the population of that great city, the capital of France, there are 300,000 individuals wanting the necessaries of life. One half at least of these earned from 3f. to 5f. a day previous to the revolution, and occupied a number of houses in the faubourgs. The proprietors of those houses, receiving no rent, and having taxes and other charges to pay, are reduced to nearly as deep distress as their tenants. In the centre of Paris, the same distress exists under another form. The large and sumptuous apartments of the fashionable quarters were occupied before the revolution by wealthy proprietors, or by persons holding lucrative employments in the public offices, or by extensive manufacturers; but nearly all those have disappeared, and the few who remain have insisted upon such a reduction of rent that the proprietor does not receive one-half of the amount to which he is entitled. Should a proprietor of house property endeavour to raise a sum of money by a first mortgage, to defray his most urgent expenses, he finds it impossible to do so, even at a most exorbitant rate of interest. Those who possess ready money refuse to part with it, either through fear, or because they expect to purchase house property when it must be sold at 50 per cent less than the value."—*La Reforme*, November 17, 1848.

It is certainly a most remarkable thing, in the history of the aberrations of the human mind, that a system of policy which has produced, and is producing, such disastrous results—and, above all, which is inflicting such deadly and irreparable wounds on the interests of the poor and the cause of freedom throughout the world—should have been, during the last eighteen years, the object of unceasing eulogy by the Liberal party on both sides of the Channel; and that the present disastrous state of affairs, both in this country and on the Continent, is nothing more than the natural and inevitable result of the principles which that party has everywhere laboured to establish. The revolution of 1830 was hailed with enthusiasm in this country by the whole Liberal party: the Irish are not more enamoured now of the revolution of 1848, than the Whigs were, eighteen years ago, of that of 1830. The Liberal Government of England did all in their power to spread far and wide the glorious example. Flanders was attacked—an English fleet and French army besieged Antwerp; and, by a coalition of the two powers, a revolutionary throne was reared in Belgium, and the King of the Netherlands prevented from re-establishing the kingdom guaranteed to him by all the powers of Europe. The Quadruple Alliance was formed to revolutionise Spain and Portugal; a sanguinary civil war was nourished for long in both kingdoms; and at length, after years of frightful warfare, the legitimate monarch and legal order of succession were set aside in both countries; queens were

put on the thrones of both instead of kings; and England enjoyed the satisfaction, for the diffusion of her revolutionary propagandism, of destroying the securities provided for the liberties of Europe by the treaty of Utrecht, and preparing a Spanish princess for the hand of a Bourbon prince.

Not content with this memorable and politic step, and even after the recent disasters of France were actually before their eyes, our rulers were so enamoured of revolution, that they could not refrain from encouraging it in every *small* state within their reach. Lord Palmerston counselled the Pope, in a too celebrated letter, to plunge into the career which has terminated so fatally for himself and for Italy. Admiral Parker long prevented the Neapolitan force from embarking for Sicily, to do there what Lord Hardinge was nearly at the same time sent to do in Ireland. We beheld the Imperial standards with complacency driven behind the Mincio; but no sooner did Radetzky disperse the revolutionary army, and advance to Milan, than British and French diplomacy interfered to arrest his march, and save their revolutionary protégé, the King of Piedmont, from the chastisement which his perfidious attack on Austria in the moment of her distress merited. The Ministerial journals are never weary of referring to the revolutions on the Continent as the cause of all the distress which has prevailed in England, since they broke out in last spring: they forget that it was England herself which first unfurled the standard of revolution, and that, if we are suffering under its effects, it is under the effects of our own measures and policy.

Strange and unaccountable as this perverted and diseased state of opinion, in a large part of the people of this country, undoubtedly is, it is easily explained when the state of society, and the channel into which political contests have run, are taken into consideration. In truth, our present errors are the direct consequence of our former wisdom; our present weakness, of our former strength; our present misery, of our former prosperity.

In the feudal ages, and over the whole Asiatic world at the present time, the contests of parties are carried on for *individuals*. No change of national policy, or of the system of internal government, is contemplated on either side. It is for one prince or another prince, for one sultaun

or another sultaun, that men draw their swords. "Under which King, Bezonian?—speak or die!" is there the watchward of all civil conflict. It was the same in this country during the feudal ages, and down to a very recent period. No man in the civil wars between Stephen and Henry II., or of the Plantagenet princes, or in the Wars of the Roses, contemplated or desired any change of government or policy in the conflict in which they were engaged. The one party struck for the Red, the other for the White Rose. Great civil and social interests were at issue in the conflict; but the people cared little or nothing for these. The contest between the Yorkists and the Lancastrians was a great feud between two clans which divided the state; and the attachment to their chiefs was the blind devotion of the Highlanders to the Pretender.

The Reformation, which first brought the dearest objects of thought and interest home to all classes, made a great change in this respect, and substituted in large proportion general questions for the adherence to particular men, or fidelity to particular families. Still, however, the old and natural instinct of the human race to attach themselves to men, not things, continued in a great degree to influence the minds of the people, and as many buckled on their armour for the man as the cause. The old Cavaliers, who periled life and lands in defence of Charles I., were as much influenced by attachment to the dignified monarch, who is immortalised in the canvass of Vandyke, as by the feelings of hereditary loyalty; and the iron bands which overthrew their ranks at Marston Moor, were as devoted to Cromwell as the tenth legion to Cæsar, or the Old Guard to Napoleon. In truth, such individual influences are so strongly founded in human nature, that they will continue to the end of the world, from whatever cause a contest may have arisen, as soon as it has continued for a certain time, and will always stand forth in prominent importance when a social has turned into a military conflict, and the perils and animosities of war have endeared their leaders to the soldiers on either side. The Vendeans soon became devoted to Henri Larochejaquelein, the Republicans to Napoleon; and in our own times, the great social conflict of the nineteenth century has been determined by the fidelity of the

Austrian soldiers to Radetzky, of the French to Cavaignac, of the German to Windischgratz.

But in the British empire, for a century past, it has been thoroughly understood, by men of sense of all parties, that a change of dynasty is out of the question, and that there is no reform worth contending for in the state, which is not to be effected by the means which the constitution itself has provided. This conviction, long impressed upon the nation, and interwoven as it were with the very framework of the British mind, having come to coincide with the passions incident to party divisions in a free state, has in process of time produced the strange and tortuous policy which, for above a quarter of a century, has now been followed in this country by the Government, and lauded to the skies by the whole Liberal party on the Continent. Deprived of the watchwords of men, the parties have come to assume those of things. Organic or social change have become the war-cry of faction, instead of change of dynasty. The nation is no longer drenched with blood by armies fighting for the Red or the White Rose, by parties striving for the mastery between the Stuart and Hanover families; but it was not less thoroughly divided by the cry of "The bill, the whole bill, and nothing but the bill," at one time, and that of "Free trade and cheap corn" at another. Social change, alterations of policy, have thus come to be the great objects which divide the nation; and, as it is ever the policy of Opposition to represent the conduct of Government as erroneous, it follows, as a necessary consequence, that the main efforts of the party opposed to the Administration always have been, since the suppression of the rebellion in 1745, to effect, when in opposition, a change in general opinion, and, when in power, to carry that change into effect by a change of policy. The old law of nature is still in operation. Action and reaction rule mankind; and in the efforts of parties mutually to supplant each other in power, a foundation is laid for an entire change of policy at stated periods, and an alteration, as great as from night to day, in the opinions and policy of the ruling party in the same state at different times.

The old policy of England—that policy under which, in the words of Macaulay, "The authority of law and the

security of property were found to be compatible with a liberty of discussion and of individual action never known before; under which form, the auspicious union of order and freedom, sprang a prosperity of which the annals of human affairs had furnished no example; under which our country, from a state of ignominious vassalage, rapidly rose to the place of umpire among European powers; under which her opulence and martial glory grew together; under which, by wise and resolute good faith, was gradually established a public credit, fruitful of marvels which to the statesmen of any former age would have appeared incredible; under which a gigantic commerce gave birth to a maritime power, compared with which every other maritime power, ancient or modern, sinks into insignificance; under which Scotland, after ages of enmity, was at length united to England, not merely by legal bonds, but by indissoluble ties of interest and affection; under which, in America, the British colonies rapidly became far mightier and wealthier than the realms which Cortes and Pizarro added to the dominions of Charles V.; under which, in Asia, British adventurers founded an empire not less splendid, and more durable, than that of Alexander,"*—was not the policy of any particular party or section of the community, and thence its long duration and unexampled success.

It was not introduced—it grew. Like the old constitution, of which it was the emanation, it arose from the wants and necessities of all classes of men during a long series of ages. It was first proclaimed in energetic terms by the vigour of Cromwell; the cry of the national representatives for markets to native industry, of the merchants for protection to their ships, produced the Navigation Laws, and laid the foundation of the colonial empire of England. Amidst all his *insouciance* and folly in the drawing-room of the Duchess of Portsmouth, and the boudoirs of the Duchess of Cleveland, it was steadily pursued by Charles II. James II. did not lose sight of this same system, amidst all his infatuation and cruelty; when directing the campaign of Jeffreys in the west, he was as steadily bent on upholding and extending the navy as when, amidst the thunders of war, he combated De Ruyter and Van Tromp

* Macaulay's *History*, i. 1–2.

on the coast of Holland. William III., Anne, and the Georges, pursued the same system. It directed the policy of Somers and Godolphin; it ruled the diplomacy of Walpole and Chatham; it guided the measures of Bute and North; it directed the genius of Pitt and Fox. It was for it that Marlborough conquered, and Wolfe fell; that Blake combated, and Hawke destroyed; that Nelson launched the thunderbolt of war, and Wellington carried the British standard to Madrid and Paris.

It was the peculiar structure of the English constitution, during this century and a half of prosperity and glory, that produced so remarkable a uniformity in the objects of the national policy. These objects were pursued alike by the Republicans and the Royalists; by the Roundheads and the Cavaliers; by the Whigs, during the seventy years of their rule that followed the Revolution, and the Tories, during the sixty years that succeeded the accession of George III. The policy was that of *protection to all the national interests, whether landed, commercial, colonial, or manufacturing.* Under this system they all grew and prospered, *alike and abreast,* in the marvellous manner which the pencil of Macaulay has sketched in the opening of his History. It was hard to say whether agriculture, manufactures, colonies, or shipping throve and prospered most during that unique period. The world had never seen anything like it before: it is doubtful if it will ever see anything like it again. Under its shelter the various interests of the empire were knit together in so close a manner, that they not only all grew and prospered together, but it was universally felt that their interests were entirely dependent on each other. The toast, "The plough, the loom, and the sail," was drunk with as much enthusiasm in the farmers' club as in the merchants' saloon. As varied as the interests with which they were charged, the policy of Government was yet perfectly steady in following out one principle—the protection of the *productive classes,* whether by land or water, whether at home or abroad.

The Legislature represented and embodied all these interests, and carried out this policy. It gave them a stability and consistency which had never been seen in the world before. Nominally the representatives of certain

towns and counties in the British islands, the House of Commons gradually became really the representatives of the varied interests of the whole British empire. The nomination burghs afforded an inlet alike to native talent and to foreign interests. Gatton and Old Sarum, or similar close burghs, afforded an entrance into the Legislature, not only to the genius of Pitt and Fox, of Burke and Sheridan, but to the wealth of Jamaica, the rising energy of Canada, the aged civilisation of Hindostan. Experienced protection reconciled all interests to a Government under which all prospered; mutual dependence made all sensible of the necessity of common unanimity. The statute-book and national treaties, from the Revolution in 1688 to the close of the war with Napoleon in 1815, exhibit the most decisive proof of the working of these varied, but not conflicting interests, in the national councils. If you contemplate the general protection afforded to agriculture and the landed interest, you would imagine the House of Commons had been entirely composed of squires. If you examine the innumerable enactments, fiscal and prohibitory, for the protection of manufactures, you would suppose it had been entirely under the government of manufacturers. If you contemplate the steady protection invariably given to the mercantile navy, you would suppose it had been chiefly directed by shipowners. If you cast your eyes on the protection constantly given by discriminating fiscal duties to colonial industry, and the vast efforts made, both by sea and land, in the field and in the cabinet, to encourage and extend our colonial dependencies, you would conclude, not only that they were represented, but that their representatives had a majority in the Legislature.

The reason of this prodigy was, that all interests had, in the course of ages, and the silent effects of time, worked their way into the legislature, and all enjoyed in fair proportion a reasonable influence on government. Human wisdom could no more *ab ante* have framed such a system, than it could have framed the British constitution. By accident, or rather the good providence of God, it grew up from the wants of men during a series of generations ; and its effects appeared in this, that—except in the cases of the American war, where unfortunate circumstances produced a

departure from the system; of the Irish Celts, whom it seems impracticable to amalgamate with Saxon institutions; and of the Scottish Highlanders, whom chivalrous honour for a short period alienated from the established government—unanimity unprecedented during the whole period pervaded the British empire. All foreign colonies were desirous to be admitted into the great protecting confederacy; the French and Dutch planters in secret prayed for the defeat of their defenders, when the standard of St George approached their shores. The Hindoos, with heroic constancy, alike in prosperous and adverse fortune, maintained their fidelity: Canada stood firm during the most dangerous crisis of our history; and the flame of loyalty burned as steadily on the banks of the St Lawrence, on the mountains of Jamaica, and on the shores of the Ganges, as in the crowded emporiums of London, or the smiling fields of Yorkshire.

But there is a limit imposed by nature to all earthly things. The growth of empires is restrained, after they have reached a certain stature, by laws as certain as those which arrest that of individuals. If a state does not find the causes of its ruin in foreign disaster, it will inevitably find it in internal opinion. This arises so naturally and evidently from the constitution of the human mind, that it may be regarded as a fixed law of nature in all countries where intellectual activity has been called forth, and as one of the most powerful agents in the government, by supreme Wisdom, of human affairs. This principle is to be found in the tendency of *original* thought to differ from the current opinion with which it is surrounded, and of party ambition to decry the system of those by whom it is excluded from power.

Universally it will be found that the greatest exertions of human intellect have been made in *direct opposition* to the current of general opinion; and that public thought in one age is in general but the echo of solitary meditation in that which has preceded it. Illustrations of this crowd on the reflecting mind from every period of history. The instances of Luther standing forth alone to shake down, Samson-like, the pillar of the corrupted Romish faith; of Bacon's opening, amid all the despotism of the Aristotelian philosophy, his inductive philosophy; of Galileo maintaining the motion of the earth even when surrounded by the terrors of the

Italian Inquisition ; of Copernicus asserting the true system of the heavens in opposition to the belief of two thousand years ; of Malthus bringing forward the paradox of the danger of human increase in opposition to the previous general opinion of mankind ; of Voltaire combating alone the giant power of the Roman Catholic hierarchy ; of Rousseau running a course against the whole ideas of his age—will immediately occur to every reader. Many of these great men adopted erroneous opinions, and, in consequence, did as much evil to their own or the next age as others did good ; but they were all characterised by one mark. Their opinions were *original*, and directly adverse to public opinion around them. The close of the nineteenth century was no exception to the general principle. Following out those doctrines of freedom from restraint of every kind, which in France had arisen from the natural resistance of men to the numerous fetters of the monarchy—and which had been brought forward by Turgot and the Economists, in the boudoirs of Madame Pompadour and the coteries of Paris—Adam Smith broached the principle of Free Trade, in respect to all things except grain and shipping. The first he excepted, because it was essential to national subsistence ; the second, because it was the pillar of national defence. The new philosophy was ardently embraced by the Liberal party, who, chagrined by long exclusion from office, were rejoiced to find a tangible and plausible ground whereon to attack the whole existing system of government. From them it gradually extended to nearly all the ardent part of the community, ever eager to embrace doctrines at variance with previous and vulgar belief, and not yet enlightened by experience as to the effect of the new system. It was soon discovered that for a century and a half we had been proceeding on false principles. The whole policy of government since the days of Cromwell had been erroneous ; in politics, in social government, in diplomacy, in the colonies, in war, in peace, at home and abroad, we had been running blindfold to destruction. True, we had become great, and glorious, and free under this abominable system ; true, it had been accompanied by a growth of national strength, and an amount of national happiness, unparalleled in any former age or country : but that was all by accident. Philosophy

had marked it with the sign of reprobation—prosperity had poured upon us by chance in the midst of universal misgovernment. By all the rules of calculation we should have been destroyed, though, strange to say, no symptoms of destruction had yet appeared amongst us. According to every principle of philosophy, the patient should long ago have been dead of the mortal disease under which he laboured; the only provoking thing was, that he was still walking about in robust and florid health.

Circumstances occurred at the same time, early in this century, which had the most powerful effect in exasperating the Opposition party throughout the country, and inducing them to embrace, universally and ardently, the new philosophy, which condemned in such unmeasured terms the whole system of government pursued by their antagonists. For half a century, since the long dominion of the Whigs was terminated in 1761 by George III., the Tories had been, with the exception of a few months, constantly in office. Though their system of government in religion, in social affairs, in foreign relations, was nothing but a continuation of that which the Whigs had introduced, and according to which the government had been conducted from 1688 to 1760, yet, in the ardour of their zeal for the overthrow of their adversaries, the Liberal party embraced on every point the opposite side. The descendants of Lord Russell became the advocates of Roman Catholic emancipation; the followers of Marlborough and Godolphin, the partisans of submission to France; the successors of Walpole and Chatham, the advocates of free trade and colonial neglect. These feelings, embraced from the influence of a determination to find fault with Government in every particular, were worked up to the highest pitch by the glorious result of the war with France, and the apparently interminable lease of power acquired by their adversaries from the overthrow of Napoleon. That memorable event, so opposite to that which they had all so long in public predicted, so entirely the reverse of that which many had in secret wished, produced a profound impression on the Whig party. Their feelings were only the more acute that, amidst the tumult of national exultation, they were forced to suppress them, and to wear the countenance of satisfaction, when the bitter-

ness of disappointment was in their hearts. To the extreme asperity of these feelings, and the universal twist which they gave to the minds of the whole Liberal party in Great Britain, the subsequent general change in their political principles is to be ascribed; and, in the practical application of these principles, the real cause of our present distressed condition is to be found.

While one set of causes thus prepared, in the triumph of Conservative and protective principles, the strongest possible reaction against them, and prognosticated, at no distant period, their general banishment from popular thought, another, and a not less powerful set, flowing from the same cause, gave these principles the means of acquiring a political supremacy, and ruling the government of the state. The old policy of England, it has been already observed, for a hundred and fifty years, had been to take care of the producers, and let the consumers take care of themselves. Such had been the effects of this protective policy, that, before the close of the revolutionary war, during which it received its full development, the producing classes, both in town and country, had become so rich and powerful, that it was easy to see they would ere long give a preponderance to urban over rural industry. The vast flood of agricultural riches poured for expenditure into towns; that of the manufacturers and merchants seldom left it. The great manufacturing and mercantile places, during a century, had advanced in population tenfold, in wealth thirtyfold. The result of this change was very curious, and in the highest degree important. Under the *shadow of protection* to industry in all its branches, riches, both in town and country, had increased so prodigiously, that the holders of it had *acquired a preponderance over the classes in the state yet engaged in the toilsome and hazardous work of production.* The owners of realised capital had become so numerous and weighty, from the beneficial effects of the protective system under which the country had so long flourished, that they formed an important *class apart, which began to look to its separate interests.* The consumers had become so numerous and affluent, that they were enabled to bid defiance to the producers. The maxim became prevalent, "Take care of the consumer, and let the producer take care of himself." Thence the

clamour for free trade. Having passed the labour of production, during which they, or their fathers, had strenuously supported the protective principles, by which they were making their money, the next thing was to support the opposite principles, by which the value of the *made money might be augmented.* This was to be done by free trade and a contracted currency. Having made millions by protection, the object now was to add a half to every million by raising its value. The way to do this seemed to be by cheapening the price of every other article, and raising the price of money ; in other words, the system of cheapening everything without reference to its effect on the interests of production.

Parliamentary reform, for which the Whigs, disappointed by long exclusion from office, laboured strenuously, in conjunction with the commercial and moneyed classes, enriched by protection, gave them the means of carrying both objects into execution, because it made two-thirds of the House of Commons the representatives of burghs. The cry of cheap bread was seductive to all classes in towns :—to the employer, because it opened the prospect of reducing the price of labour, and to the operative, because it presented that of lowering that of provisions. To these two objects, accordingly, of raising the value of money and lowering the remuneration of industry, the Reform parliament, the organ of the moneyed interest and consuming classes, has, through all the changes of party, been perfectly steady. It is no wonder it has been so, for it was the first-born of those interests. Twenty years before the cry for reform convulsed the nation—in 1810—the Bullion Committee brought forward the principle of a metallic, and, consequently, a contracted currency ; and they recommended its adoption in the very crisis of the war, when Wellington lay at Torres Vedras, and when the monetary crisis to which it must have led would have made us a province of France. Reform was the consequence of the change in the currency, not its cause. The whole time from 1819 to 1831, with the exception of 1824 and 1825, was one uninterrupted period of suffering. Such was the misery it produced, that the minds of men were prepared for any change. A chaos of unanimity was produced by a chaos of suffering.

Thus, by a singular and most interesting chain of causes and effects, it was the triumph of Conservative and protective principles in the latter years of the war, and the entire demonstration thus afforded of their justice and expedience, which was the immediate cause of their subsequent abandonment, and of all the misery which has thence arisen, and with which we are still everywhere surrounded. For it at once turned all the intellectual energies of the great Liberal party to oppose, in every particular, the system by which their opponents had been glorified, and concentrated all the energies of the now powerful moneyed classes to swell, by a change of policy, the fortunes on which their consequence depended, and which had arisen from the long prevalence of the opposite system. For such is the tendency to action and reaction in all vigorous and intellectual communities, that truth itself is for long no security against their occurrence. On the contrary, so vehement are the passions excited by a great and lasting triumph of one party, even though in the right, that the victory of truth, whether in politics or religion, is often the immediate cause of the subsequent triumph of error. The great Roman Catholic reaction against the Reformation, which Ranke has so clearly elucidated, and Macaulay has so powerfully illustrated, has its exact counterpart in the great political reaction of the Whig party, of which Macaulay is himself the brightest ornament.

That this is the true explanation of the strange and tortuous policy, both in domestic and foreign affairs, under which the nation has so long suffered, is apparent on the slightest survey of political affairs in the last and present century.

The old principle of the English constitution, which had worked itself into existence, or grown up from the necessities of men, during a whole course of years, was, that the whole *interests* of the state should be represented, and that the House of Commons was the assembly in which the representatives of all those varied interests were to be found. For the admission of these varied interests, a varied system of electoral qualifications, admitting all interests, noble, mercantile, industrial, popular, landed, and colonial, was indispensable. In the old House of Commons, all these classes found a place for their representatives, and thence

the commercial protection it afforded to industry. According to the new system, a vast majority of seats was to be allotted to *one class only*, the householders and shopkeepers of towns. That class was the moneyed and consuming class; and thence the whole subsequent course of British policy, which has been to sacrifice everything to their interests.

The old maxim of government, alike with Whigs and Tories, was, that native industry of all sorts, and especially agricultural industry, was to be protected, and that foreign competition was to be admitted only in so far as was not inconsistent with this primary object. The new philosophy taught, and the modern Liberals carried into execution, a different principle. They went on the maxim that the interests of the consumers alone were to be considered; that to cheapen everything was the great object; and that it mattered not how severely the producers of articles suffered, provided those who purchased them were enabled to do so at a reduced rate. This policy, long lauded in abstract writings and reviews, was at length carried into execution by Sir R. Peel, by the tariff of 1842 and the free-trade measures of 1846.

To protect and extend our colonial dependencies was the great object of British policy, alike with Whigs and Tories, from the time of Cromwell to the fall of Napoleon. In them it was thought our manufacturers would find a lasting and rapidly increasing market for their produce, which would, in the end, enable us equally to defy the hostility, and withstand the rivalry of foreign states. The new school held that this was an antiquated prejudice: that colonies were a burden rather than a blessing to the mother country: that the independence of America was the greatest blessing that ever befell Great Britain: and that, provided we could buy colonial produce a little cheaper, it signified nothing though our colonies perished by the want of remuneration for their industry, or were led to revolt from exasperation at the cruel and unnatural conduct of the mother country.

The navy was regarded by all our statesmen, without exception, from Cromwell to Pitt, as the main security of the British empire; its bulwark in war; the bridge which united its far-distant provinces during peace. To feed it with skilled seamen, the Navigation Laws were upheld even

by Adam Smith and the first free-traders, as the wisest enactments which were to be found in the British statute-book. But here, too, it was discovered that our ancestors had been in error ; the system under which had flourished, for two centuries, the greatest naval power that ever existed, was found to have been an entire mistake ; and, provided freights could be had ten per cent cheaper, it was of no consequence though the fleets of France and Russia blockaded the Thames and Mersey, and two-thirds of our trade was carried on in foreign bottoms.

To provide a CURRENCY equal to the wants of the nation, and capable of growth in proportion to the amount of their numbers and transactions, was one main object of the old policy of Great Britain. Thence the establishment of banks in such numbers in every part of the empire, during the eighteenth century, and the introduction of the suspension of the obligation to pay in gold in 1797, when the necessities of war had drained nearly all that part of the currency out of the country, and it was evident that, unless a substitute for it, in sufficient quantities, was provided, the nation itself, and all the individuals in it, would speedily become bankrupt. The marvels of British finance, from that time till 1815, which excited the deserved astonishment of the whole world, had no effect in convincing the impassioned opponents of Mr Pitt, that this was the true system adapted for that or any similar crisis. On the contrary, it left no doubt in their minds that it was entirely wrong. The whole philosophers and Liberal school of politicians discovered that the very opposite was the right principle ; that gold, the most variable in price, and the most evanescent because the most desired and portable of earthly things, was the only safe foundation for a currency ; that paper was worthless and perilous, unless in so far as it could be instantly converted into that incomparable metal ; and that, consequently, the more the precious metals were withdrawn from the country by the necessities of war, or the effects of adverse exchanges, the more the paper circulation should be contracted. If the last sovereign went out, they held it clear the last note should be drawn in. The new system was brought into practice by Sir R. Peel, by the acts of 1844 and 1845, simultaneously with a vast importation of grain under the

free-trade system—and we know the consequence. We were speedily near our last sovereign and last note also.

To establish a sinking fund which should secure to the nation, during peace, the means of discharging the debt contracted amidst the necessities of war, was one of the greatest objects of the old English policy, which was supported with equal earnestness by Mr Pitt and Mr Fox, by Mr Addington and Lord Henry Petty. So steadily was this admirable system adhered to through all the dangers and necessities of the war, that we had a clear sinking fund of £15,000,000 a-year, when the contest terminated in 1815, which, if kept up at that amount, from the indirect taxes from which it was levied during peace, would, beyond all question, as the loans had ceased, have discharged the whole debt by the year 1845. But the Liberals soon discovered that this was the greatest of all errors; it was all a delusion; the mathematical demonstration on which it was founded was a fallacy; and the only wisdom was to repeal the indirect taxes from which the sinking fund was maintained, and leave posterity to dispose of the debt as they best could, without any fund for its discharge. This system was gradually carried into effect by the successive repeal of the indirect taxes by different Administrations; until, at length, after thirty-three years of peace, we have, instead of the surplus of fifteen millions bequeathed to us by the war, an average *deficit* of fifteen hundred thousand pounds; and the debt, after the longest peace recorded in British history, has undergone scarcely any diminution.

Indirect taxation was the main basis of the British finance in old times—equally when directed by the Whigs as the Tories. Direct taxes were a last and painful resource, to be reserved for a period during war when they had become absolutely unavoidable. So efficacious was this system proved to be by the event, when acting on a nation enjoying protected industry and an adequate and irremovable currency, that, before the end of the war, £72,000,000 was, amidst universal prosperity, with ease raised from eighteen millions of people in Great Britain and Ireland. This astonishing result, unparalleled in the previous history of the world, had no influence in convincing the modern Liberals that the system which produced it

was right. On the contrary, it left no doubt in their minds that it was entirely wrong. They introduced the opposite system; in twenty-five years they repealed £40,000,000 of indirect taxes; and they re-introduced the income tax as a permanent burden during peace. We see the result. The sinking fund has disappeared; the income tax is fixed about our necks; a deficit of from a million and a half to two millions is annually incurred; and it is now more difficult to extract fifty-two millions annually from twenty-nine millions of souls, than, at the close of the war, it was to raise seventy-two millions from eighteen millions of inhabitants.

To discourage revolution, both abroad and at home, and enable industry, in peace and tranquillity, to reap the fruits of its toil, was the grand object of the great contest which Pitt's wisdom bequeathed to his successors, and Wellington's arm brought to a glorious termination. This, however, was ere long discovered to be the greatest error of all. England, it was found out, had a decided interest in promoting the cause of revolution all over the world. So enamoured did we soon become of the propagandist mania, that we pursued it in direct opposition to our plain national interests, and with the entire abrogation of our whole previous policy, for which we had engaged in the greatest and most costly wars, alike under Whig and Tory administrations. We supported revolutions in the South American States, though thereby we reduced, to a half of its former amount, the supply of the precious metals throughout the globe; and, in consequence, increased immensely the embarrassment which a contracted paper currency had brought upon the nation. We supported revolution in Belgium, though thereby we brought the tri-color standard down to Antwerp, and surrendered to French influence the barrier fortresses won by the victories of Marlborough and Wellington. We supported it during four years of carnage and atrocity in Spain, though thereby we undid the work of our own hands in the treaty of Utrecht, surrendered the whole objects gained by the War of the Succession, and placed the female line upon the throne, as if to invite the French princes to come and carry off the glittering prize. We supported revolutions in Sicily and Italy, though thereby we gave such a blow to our export trade, that it

sank £1,400,000 in the single month of last May, and above £5,000,000 in the course of the year 1848.

To abolish the slave-trade was one of the objects which Whigs and Tories had most at heart in the latter years of the old system; and in that great and glorious contest Pitt, Fox, and Wilberforce stood side by side. But this object, so important in its results, so interesting to humanity from its tendency to alleviate human suffering, ere long yielded to the enlightened views of modern Liberals. It was discovered that it was much more important to cheapen sugar *for a time** than to rescue the African race from perdition. Free trade in sugar was introduced, although it was demonstrated, and indeed confessed, that the effect of it would be to ruin all the free-labour colonies, and throw the supply of the world into the hands of the slave states. Provided, for a few years, you succeeded in reducing the average retail price of sugar a penny a pound, it was deemed of no consequence though we extinguished the growth of free-labour sugar, destroyed colonies in which a hundred millions of British capital were invested, and doubled the slave trade in extent, and quadrupled it in horror, throughout the globe.

It had been the constant policy of the British Government, under all administrations, for above a century and a half, to endeavour to reclaim the Irish population, by introducing among them colonies of English who might teach them industry, and Protestant missionaries who might reclaim them from barbarism. The Irish landlords and boroughs were the outposts of civilisation among a race of savages, the Irish Church the station of Christianity amidst the darkness of Romish slavery. So effectual was this system, and so perfectly adapted to the character of the Celtic race—capable of great things when led by others, but utterly unfit for self-government, and incapable of improvement when left to itself—that even in the ruthless hands of Cromwell, yet reeking with the slaughter of stormed cities, it soon spread a degree of prosperity through the country then unknown, and rarely if ever since equalled in that ill-starred land.† But the experience of the utter futility of

* Observe, *for a time!* We shall see anon what the price of sugar will be when the English colonies are destroyed, and the slave plantations have the monopoly of the market in their hands.

† "Cromwell supplied the void made by his conquering sword, by pouring in

all attempts, during a century and a half, to leave the native Irish Celts to themselves or their own direction, had no effect whatever in convincing our modern Liberals that they were incapable of self-direction, and would only be ruined by Saxon institutions. On the contrary, it left no doubt on their minds that the absence of self-government was the sole cause of the wretchedness of the country, and that nothing was wanting but an entire participation in the privileges of British subjects, to render them as industrious, prosperous, and loyal as the yeomen of Kent or Surrey. In pursuance of those principles, Catholic Emancipation was granted. The Whigs had effected one revolution in 1688, by coalescing with the whole Tories to exclude the Catholics from the government; they brought about another revolution in 1829, by coalescing with a section of the Tories to bring them in. In furtherance of the new system, so plausible in theory, so dangerous in practice, of extending to all men, of all races and in all stages of political advancement, the same privileges, the Liberals successively gave the Irish the command of their boroughs, the abridgment of the Protestant Church, and the abolition of tithes as a burden on the tenant. They encouraged agitation, allowed treason to be openly spoken in every part of the country, and winked at monster meetings till the community was wellnigh thrown into convulsions. Meanwhile agriculture was neglected, industry disappeared, capital was scared away. The land was run out, and became unfit for anything but lazybeds of potatoes. The people became agitators, not cultivators: they were always running about to meetings, not labouring in their fields. The potato-blight fell on a country thus prepared for ruin; and the unparalleled misery of 1847, and the rebellion of 1848, were the consequence.

It would be easy to carry these illustrations farther, and to trace the working of the principles we have mentioned

numerous colonies of the Anglo-Saxon blood and of the Calvinistic faith. Strange to say, under that iron rule the conquered country began to wear an outward face of prosperity. Districts, which had recently been as wild as those where the first white settlers of Connecticut were contending with the Red Men, *were in a few years transformed into the likeness of Kent and Norfolk.* New buildings, roads, and plantations were everywhere begun. The rent of estates rose fast; and some of the English landowners began to complain that they were met in every market by the products of Ireland, and to clamour for protecting laws."—MACAULAY'S *History*, i. 130.

through the whole modern system of government in Great Britain. Enough has been said to show that the system is neither founded on the principles contended for by the old Whigs, nor on any appreciation of, or attention to, the national interests, or the dictates of experience in any respect. It has arisen entirely from a blind desire of change, and an opposition to the old system of government, whether of Whig or Tory origin, and a selfish thirst for aggrandisement on the part of the moneyed and commercial classes, whom that system had elevated to riches and power. Experience was not disregarded by this school of politicians; on the contrary, it was sedulously attended to, its lessons carefully marked. But it was considered as a beacon to be avoided, not a light to be followed. Against its conclusions the whole weight of declamation and shafts of irony were directed. It had been the *cri de guerre* of their enemies, the standard of Mr Pitt's policy; therefore the opposite system was to be inscribed on their banners. It was the ruling principle of their political opponents; and, worst of all, it was the system which, though it had raised the country to power and greatness, had for twenty years excluded themselves from power. Thence the modern system under which the nation has suffered, and is suffering, such incalculable misfortunes. It has been said, by an enlightened Whig of the old school, that "this age appears to be one in which *every conceivable folly* must be believed and *reduced to practice* before it is abandoned." It is really so; and the reason is, it is an age in which the former system of government, founded on experience and brought about by necessity, has been supplanted by one based on a systematic and invariable determination to change the old system in every particular. The Liberals, whether factious or moneyed, of the new school flattered themselves they were making great advances in political science, when they were merely yielding to the same spirit which made the Calvinists stand up when they prayed, because all the world before them had knelt down, and sit still during psalms because the Roman Catholics had stood up.

But truth is great, and will prevail; experience is its test, and is perpetually contradicting the theories of man. The year 1848 has been no exception to the maxims of Tacitus

and Burke. Dreadful indeed in suffering, appalling in form, are the lessons which it has read to mankind! Ten months have not elapsed, since, by a well-concerted urban tumult, seconded by the treachery of the National Guard, the throne of the Barricades was overturned in France: and what do we already see on the continent of Europe? Vienna petitioning for a *continuation* of the state of siege, as the only security against the tyranny of democracy; Berlin hailing with rapture the dissolution of the Assembly, and reappearance of the king in the capital; Milan restored to the sway of the Austrians; France seeking, in the *quasi* imperial crown of Prince Louis Napoleon, with 90,000 soldiers in its capital, a refuge from the insupportable evils of a democratic republic. The year 1848 has added another to the numerous proofs which history affords, that popular convulsions, from whatever cause arising, can terminate only in the rule of the sword; but it has taught two other lessons of incalculable importance to the present and future tranquillity of mankind. These are, that soldiers who in civil convulsions fraternise with the insurgents and violate their oaths, are the *worst enemies* of the people, for they inevitably induce a military despotism, which extinguishes all hopes of freedom. The other is, that the institution of a national guard is in troubled times of all others the most absurd; and that to put arms into the hands of the people, when warmed by revolutionary passions, is only to light the torch of civil discord with your own hand, and give over the country to anarchy, ruin, and slavery.

Nor has the year been less fruitful of civil premonitions or lessons of the last importance to the future tranquillity and prosperity of Great Britain. Numerous popular delusions have been dispelled during that period. The dreams of Irish independence have been broken; English Chartism has been crushed. The revolutionists see that the people of Great Britain are not disposed to yield their property to the spoiler, their throats to the murderer, their homes to the incendiary. Free trade and a fettered currency have brought forth their natural fruits—national embarrassment, general suffering, popular misery. One half of the wealth of our manufacturing towns has been destroyed since the new system began. Two years of free trade and

a contracted currency have undone nearly all that twenty years of protection and a sufficient currency had done. The great mercantile class have suffered so dreadfully under the effect of their own measures, that their power for good or for evil has been essentially abridged. The colossus which, for a quarter of a century, has bestrode the nation, has been shaken by the earthquake which itself had prepared. Abroad and at home, in peace and in war, delusion has brought forth suffering. The year of revolutions has been the NINTH OF THERMIDOR OF LIBERAL PRINCIPLES, for it has brought them to the test of experience.

BRITISH HISTORY DURING THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

[BLACKWOOD'S MAGAZINE, March 1845]

No effort of genius or industry can make the history of England during the eighteenth century equal in interest to that of either the seventeenth or nineteenth centuries. By the eighteenth century is meant the period of it ending in 1792 : the subsequent eight years begin a new era—the era of Revolutions—which properly belongs to the nineteenth. It was essentially a period of repose. Placed midway between the great religious effort which, commencing in the middle of the sixteenth, was not closed in the British Islands till the end of the seventeenth century, and the not less vehement political struggle which began in the world with the French, or perhaps the American Revolution, and is still in uninterrupted activity, it exhibits a resting-place between the two great schisms which have distracted and distinguished modern times. It wants the ardent zeal, intrepid spirit, and enthusiastic devotion, of the former epoch, not less than the warm aspirations, fierce contests, and extravagant expectations of the latter. Passion had exhausted itself; energy was worn out by exertion; enthusiasm damped by disappointment. We no longer see men nobly sacrificing themselves for what they deemed the public good; the generous had ceased to obliterate the selfish passions; good sense was the characteristic of the period; a desire for repose its leading principle; selfishness its ruling motive. It is ever so with men, when vehement passions are not awakened, and the ardour of visionary pursuit has not obliterated the desire for immediate gratification.

Walpole's Memoirs of the Reign of George III. London: 1845. 2 vols.

But if the eighteenth century can never rival the eras of the Reformation and the French Revolution in heart-stirring events, animated narrative, picturesque description, generous devotion, and sanguinary ambition, it is, perhaps, superior to either in the lessons of political wisdom with which it is fraught. It is so because it exhibits on a great scale, and for a long period, the *results* of those changes which had been the subject of that vehement struggle in the two preceding centuries, and enables us to appreciate, by actual experience, the benefits and evils of those great alterations in civil and religious institutions, which, after so long and severe a contest, had at length come to be thoroughly established. The survey is, in some respects, disheartening, but it is instructive; if it dispels many theories and blights much anticipation, it confirms many truths, and has established some principles which will probably never again be questioned. We are not aware that the history of the eighteenth century has ever yet been written in this spirit. It is understood now to be in the hands of learning and genius; let us hope that equanimity and impartial judgment will preside as much as these brilliant qualities in the completion of the great undertaking.

The great passion of the sixteenth century was for religious emancipation. The real evil which it was the object of the Reformation to shake off was the despotism of the Romish priesthood: the freedom for which the Reformers contended was the freedom of the human soul. The immediate object, the exciting cause, indeed, of Luther's movements, was the overthrow of the corrupt sale of indulgences, which, in the time of Leo X., had brought such scandal on the Church of Rome; but religious freedom was the general and durable passion of the Reformation. It was the constrained uniformity of worship, the compulsory unity of belief, the slavish submission to authority, in the dearest concerns of existence, which was the real evil that was complained of. This want, so natural to an age of mental activity, so indispensable to one of advancing freedom, the satisfaction of which is as necessary as vital air to one of general intelligence, distinctly appeared in the forms of worship which the Reformers generally established when they had thrown off the authority of the Roman Pontiff. The Romish liturgies,

touching, admirable, and catholic, as great part of them are, were in general abolished; and, in their stead, extempore prayers, often of portentous length, were used, to give each individual minister an opportunity of introducing, in every part of the sacred proceeding, his peculiar tenets. The sermon, for a similar reason, became the longest and most important part of the service. Every one knows how strongly the same lines of distinction still characterise the ultra-Reformers, who contend for the Calvinistic tenets and Presbyterian form of worship, and those more moderate partisans of the Reformation who have embraced the less violent schism of the Church of England.

Political equality was, and still is, the grand aspiration of the nineteenth century. What the ardent multitudes who embraced the principles of the French Revolution desired, was equality of privilege, and universal participation in power. They saw the injustice and cruelty of their former oppressors, they felt how galling their chains had been, and they flattered themselves that, if they could once get possession of the reins of power, they had suffered too severely from their abuse to be in any danger of being led astray in the use they made of them. Abolition of rank and privilege, the opening of all careers to all, and the admission of all into the equal enjoyment of power, by means of a government resting on universal suffrage, was the general object of ambition, and has been established for a brief period in France, Spain, Portugal, and Piedmont; more durably in North and South America. What the results of this system of government are to be, is the great problem which is in the course of solution in the nineteenth century; but be these results fortunate or unfortunate, it is this which constitutes the characteristic of the period, and will form the object of close and anxious attention to historians in future times. It was a principle and basis of government wholly new in human affairs. No previous republic, either in ancient or modern times, had exhibited any approach to it. The exclusion of the great body of the working class, in all the states of antiquity, from any share either in municipal or social powers, by reason of the generality of slavery—the arrangement of men in trades and crafts, through whose heads all their powers were exercised,

in the free cities of Italy and Flanders, in modern times, and in general in all the European burghs, necessarily rendered the basis of government in all former commonwealths essentially different. A democratic valley may have existed in Uri or Unterwalden, where all the citizens were equally rich in fortune, and nearly equally poor in intelligence; but the example of a great community resting on universal suffrage, and a simple majority of votes, began with the year 1789.

Although the proper democratic spirit existed in great strength in many of the leaders of the Great Rebellion, and its extravagances generally affected the army, and some of the powerful leaders of that convulsion, yet extension of political power was not the object of the *national* will. This is decisively proved by the fact, that when they gained the power, the people made no attempt, in any material respect, to alter the public institutions. Cromwell, doubtless, was a military usurper; but a military usurper is only the head of a warlike republic, and he is constrained to obey the wishes of the soldiers who have elevated him to power. Neither he nor the Long Parliament made any important alterations on the lasting structure of government, though, for the time, they totally altered its practice. The law was administered on the old precedents during the whole Protectorate. The estates of the Malignants were put under sequestration, and many of the church lands were confiscated; but no great alteration in the foundations of government took place. Power, when the military oppression was removed, immediately returned to its former seats. The parliaments summoned by Cromwell proved so refractory, that they were in general dissolved after having sat a few days; juries, throughout his reign, were so hostile to his government that they acquitted nearly all the state offenders brought before them; and legal prosecutions fell into disuse. Everything was done by military force; but it never occurred to him to turn up the soil, so as to bring fresh elements into action:—he never thought of summoning a parliament resting on universal suffrage, or establishing a revolutionary tribunal, the jurors of which were nominated by that democratic assembly. So as the victorious party were allowed to chant hymns as they pleased, and hear long

sermons replete with any absurdity, and indulge in the freedom of the pulpit, they cared nothing for that of the press, or altering the structure of government. When Charles II. was recalled by Monk, he had only to issue writs to the counties and boroughs which had returned the Long Parliament, to obtain the most thoroughly loyal commons that ever sat in England.

Although the change of government in 1688 is usually called "the Revolution," and although it certainly was a most decisive overthrow so far as the reigning family was concerned, yet it was by no means a revolution in the sense in which we now understand the word. It made no change in the basis of power in the state, though it altered the dynasty which sat on the throne, and for seventy years fixed the reign of power in the hands of the Whig party, who had been most instrumental in placing William and Mary on it. But the structure of government remained unchanged; or rather, it was changed only to be rendered more stable and powerful. We owe to the Revolution many of our greatest blessings; but not the least of these has been the removal of the causes of weakness which had so often before, in English history, proved fatal to the throne. It gave us a national debt, a standing army, and a stable foreign policy. The sum annually raised by William in taxes, within five years after he obtained the throne, was triple what had been so much the subject of complaint in the time of Charles I.; but the effect of this was to give us a firm government and steady policy. De Witt had said, in the disgraceful days of the alliance of Charles II. with France, that the changes of English policy had now become so frequent, that no man could rely on any system being continued steadily for two years together. The Continental interests and connexions of William, and subsequently of the Hanover family, gave us a durable system of foreign policy, and imprinted, for a hundred and forty years, that steadiness in our councils, without which neither individuals nor nations ever attained either lasting fame or greatness. Nor was it the least blessing consequent upon such a change of external policy, and of the wars which it necessarily induced, that it gave Government the lasting support of a standing army, and thus prevented that ruinous prostration

of the executive before the burst of popular passion, which had so often induced the most dreadful disorders in English history. After 1688, the standing army, though inconsiderable compared with what it has since become, was always respectable, and adequate, as the result of the rebellions in 1715 and 1745 demonstrated, to the defence of Government against the most serious domestic dangers. That of itself was an incalculable blessing, and cheaply purchased by the national debt and all the bloodshed of our foreign wars. Had Charles I. possessed five thousand guards, he would at once have crushed the Great Rebellion; and the woful oppression of the Long Parliament, which, during the eleven years that it sat, extorted £80,000,000, equal to £200,000,000 at this time, from an impoverished and bleeding nation, would have been prevented.

Englishmen are not accustomed to pride themselves upon the external successes and military triumphs of the eighteenth century; and they have been so eclipsed by those of the Revolutionary war, that they are now in a great measure thrown into the shade. Yet nothing is more certain than that it is in external success and warlike glory, that, during the seventy years which immediately succeeded the Revolution, we must look for the chief rewards and best vindication of that convulsion. England then took its appropriate place as the head of the Protestant faith, the bulwark of the liberties of Europe. The ambition of the house of Bourbon, which so nearly proved fatal to them in the person of Louis XIV., became the lasting object of their apprehension and resistance. The heroic steadiness of William, the consummate genius of Marlborough, the ardent spirit of Chatham, won for us the glories of the War of the Succession and of the Seven Years. Though deeply checkered, especially in the American war, with disaster, the eighteenth century was, upon the whole, one of external glory and national advancement. To their honour be it spoken, the Whigs at that period were the party who had the national glory and success at heart, and made the greatest efforts, both on the theatre of arms and of diplomacy, to promote it. The Tories were lukewarm or indifferent to national interests or honour, averse to foreign alliances, and often willing to purchase peace by the abandonment of the chief advantages which war

had purchased. During the Revolutionary war, the case was just the reverse—the parties mutually changed places. The Tories were the national and patriotic, the Whigs the grumbling and discontented party. Both parties, in both periods, were in reality actuated, perhaps unconsciously, by their party interests—the Whigs were patriotic and national, the Tories backward and lukewarm, when the Whigs were in power, and derived lustre from foreign success; the Tories were patriotic and national when they held the reins of government, and the opposite vices had passed over to their antagonists.

But if, from the external policy and foreign triumphs of the Whigs during the first sixty years of the eighteenth century, we turn to the domestic government which they established and the social ameliorations which they introduced, we shall see much less reason to congratulate ourselves on the benefits gained by the Revolution. It is here that the great moral and political lesson of the eighteenth century is to be found; this it is which it behoves our historians to tell; this it is which they have left untold. The long possession of power, after the accession of William and Mary, by the Whig party, which continued uninterrupted for seventy years, and the want of any philosophical history of the period since they were dispossessed of office, have prevented the truth from being boldly told, or even generally known in this country. It is much more generally appreciated, however, by Continental writers, and we may rest assured the eyes of future generations will be steadily fixed on it. The danger is, that it will throw discredit on the cause both of civil and religious freedom, in the eyes of future generations in the world. Let us, in the first instance, boldly, and without seeking to disguise the truth, examine what are the religious and civil evils which have attracted the attention of mankind in Great Britain during the eighteenth century; and then inquire whether they are the necessary result of the Reformation and the Revolution, or have arisen from causes foreign to that of religious and civil freedom—in a word, from the usual intermixture of human selfishness and iniquity with those great convulsions.

The two great evils which have disfigured the Reformed church in the British islands, since its final establishment at the Revolution, have been the endless multiplication and

unceasing rancour of sects, and the palpable outgrowth of the population beyond the possibility of their gratuitous instruction in religious truth by means of the national church.

The three great evils which have been felt in the political and social world in England, during the eighteenth century, are the prodigious, and in general irresistible, power of an oligarchy, the unbounded parliamentary and official corruption by which their influence has been upheld, and the unprecedented spread of pauperism through the working classes of society.

In these days the reality of those evils will probably not be disputed in any quarter, when we have seen the latter lead to the Reform Bill, and the great organic change of 1832, as well as keep the nation, and all serious thinkers in it, in a state of constant anxiety; and the former rend the national church in Scotland asunder, threaten the most serious religious divisions in England, and in both countries permit the growth of a huge body of practical heathens in the midst of a Christian land.

Were these evils the necessary and inevitable result of the Reformation and the Revolution, or have they arisen from causes foreign to these changes, and which, in future times, may be detached from them? The Roman Catholic writers on the Continent all maintain the former opinion, and consider them as the necessary effect and just punishment of the great schism from the Church; which, by a natural consequence, say they, ended in civil convulsion, public immorality, and social distress. The English writers have hitherto rather avoided than grappled with the subject; they have rather denied the existence of the evils than sought to account for them. Let us consider to what cause these unquestionable evils of the eighteenth century are really to be ascribed.

They know little of the human heart who expect that, in an age and country where religion *is at all thought of*, sects and religious differences will not prevail. As well might you expect that, in a free community, political parties are to be unknown. Truth, indeed, is one and the same in all ages; but so also is the light of the sun: yet in how many different hues, and under how many different appearances, does it manifest itself in the world! In the smoky city,

and on the clear mountain; on the sandy desert, and in the stagnant marsh; radiant with the warmth of July, or faintly piercing the gloom of December. So various are the capacities, feelings, emotions, and dispositions of men, that, on any subject which really interests them, diversity of opinion is as inevitable as difference in their countenances, stature, character, fortune, and state in the world. Hence it was that our Saviour said he came to bring not peace on earth but a sword; to divide the father from the son, to array the mother against the daughter. It will be so to the end of the world. Unity of opinion on political subjects seems to prevail under Asiatic despotism; in religious, under the European Papacy, but nowhere else. The conclusion to be drawn from the absence of all theological disputes in a community is, not that all think alike on religion, but that none think at all.

But although no rational man who knows the human heart will ever express a wish to see entire religious unity prevail in a state, or expect that this can be the case if any degree of freedom prevails, yet there can be no question that the prodigious multiplication of sects in Britain, which strikes foreigners with such astonishment, and also the immense mass of civilised heathenism which, through the whole of the eighteenth century, was growing up in the island, are mainly to be ascribed to the iniquitous confiscation of the property of the Church which took place at the Reformation. The proportion of the tithes of England which belongs to lay impropriators, is more considerable than that which is still in the hands of the Church; and if to them are added the abbey and monastery lands, they would by this time have amounted to a very large annual sum, probably not less than £6,000,000 or £7,000,000 a-year. In Scotland, it is well known, the Church lands at the Reformation were about a third of the whole landed property. They would now, therefore, have produced £1,700,000 a-year, as the entire rental is somewhat above £5,000,000. What a noble fund here existed, formed and set apart by the piety and charity of former ages, for the service of the altar and of the poor—two causes which God hath joined, and no man should put asunder! What incalculable good would it have done, if it had been preserved sacred for its proper

destination—sacred from the corruptions, mummery, and despotism of the Romish Church, but preserved inviolate for the support of religion, the relief of suffering, the spread of education! What is it which blights and paralyses all the efforts now made, whether by individuals, voluntary associations, or the state, for the attainment of those truly godlike objects? Is it not ever one thing, the practical impossibility of finding the requisite funds to support the institutions necessary to grapple with the evils on a scale at all commensurate to their magnitude? The Established Church could not spread for want of funds to erect and endow churches; meanwhile the population in the manufacturing districts and great towns was rapidly increasing, and, in consequence, part of the people took refuge in the divisions of dissent, part in the oblivion of every species of religion. Thence the multiplication of sects, the spread of pauperism, the growth of civilised heathenism in the state. The poor-laws dated from the dissolution of the monasteries; the forty-second of Elizabeth stands a durable record of the real origin of that burdensome tax. It was the appropriation of the funds of religion and charity to the gratification of secular rapacity which has been the cause of the chief religious and social evils under which Great Britain has ever since laboured, and it is this which still presents an invincible obstacle to all the efforts which are made for their removal.

But the confiscation of the Church lands and tithes to the use of the temporal nobility was not a necessary part of the Reformation, any more than the confiscation of the estates of the Church and the emigrants was a necessary step in the progress of freedom in France. In both cases, the iniquitous spoliation was the result of human wickedness mingling with the current, and taking advantage of the generous effort for religious or civil emancipation on the part of the many, to render it the means of achieving individual robbery for behoof of the few. The Reformation might have been established in the utmost purity in Great Britain, without one shilling being diverted from the service of the Church or the maintenance of the poor, and with the preservation of a fund large enough to have provided for the permanent support of the unfortunate, and the progres-

sive extension of the Established Church, in proportion to the increase and wants of the inhabitants. In like manner, the Revolution might have been conducted to a successful, and probably bloodless termination in France, without the unutterable present misery and hopeless ultimate prostration of religion and freedom, which resulted from the confiscations of the Convention, and the division of all the land in the kingdom among the peasants. In neither case are we justified in stigmatising the cause of freedom on account of the dreadful excesses which were committed by the selfish who joined in its support; but in both we must acknowledge the impartial justice of Providence, which has made the iniquity of men work out their own appropriate and well-deserved punishments, and has made it to descend to the third and fourth generations from those who committed or permitted the deeds of injustice.

The power of the oligarchy, which resulted from the Revolution of 1688, and the unbounded corruption by which, for seventy years afterwards, their power was maintained, has been less the subject of observation or censure by subsequent writers, for the very obvious reason that the popular party, who had gained the victory at the Revolution, were during all that period in power, and they have been in no hurry to expose or decry these degrading, but to them most profitable, abuses. It is probable that they never would have been brought to light at all, but would have quietly and irrevocably sapped the foundations of the British character and of British greatness, had it not been that, fortunately for the country, the incubus of corrupting Whig aristocracy was thrown off by George III. and Lord Bute in 1761, and cast down by the same monarch and Mr Pitt in 1784; and, in their rage and disappointment, they exposed, when practised by their opponents, the well-known, and, to them, long profitable abuses by which the Government since the Revolution had been carried on. It is the revelations on this subject which have recently issued from the press which have cast so broad, and, to the philosophic historian, so important a light on the history of the first two-thirds of the eighteenth century; and among them, the letters and memoirs of Horace Walpole occupy a distinguished place. Certainly it was far from the intention of

that able and witty annalist to illustrate the unbounded abuses so long practised by Sir Robert Walpole and the Whigs who preceded him, or the vast blessings conferred upon the country by George III. and Lord Bute, who first broke through the degrading spell. We have heard little of this view of the subject from the able and learned Whigs who have reviewed his works. Yet it lies on the very surface of things, and little need be said, and still less learned, to show that it is there that the turning-point and great political moral of the history of England, during the eighteenth century, is to be found.

The truth on this subject could not so long have been kept out of view, had it not been that, till very recently, no historian at all worthy of the name has approached the subject of English history during the eighteenth century. The immortal work of Hume, as all the world knows, comes down only to the Revolution of 1688; and of the subsequent period, down to that when his history was written, in 1760, he has told us only that the monopoly of offices, places, and opinions, by the dominant Whig party, had been so close and uninterrupted, that it had wellnigh rendered it impossible to arrive at the truth on the subject. Smollett, whose continuation of Hume is to be seen in every bookseller's window beside its great predecessor, is wholly unworthy of the honourable place which chance, and the neglect of others, have hitherto assigned it. Admirable as a novelist—at least as that character was understood in those days—graphic, entertaining, humorous—Smollett had none of the qualities necessary for a historian. He was neither a soldier nor an orator, a poet nor a philosopher. The campaigns of Marlborough, the eloquence of Chatham, were alike lost upon him. He was neither warmed by the victory of Blenheim nor the death of Wolfe: the adventures of Charles Edward, and the disasters of Saratoga, were narrated with the same imperturbable phlegm. As to philosophic views of the progress of society, or the social and political effects of the Revolution of 1688 and the Reformation, the thing was out of the question: it belonged neither to his age nor character to dream of anything of the kind. He was, in his history at least, a mere bookseller's hack, who compiled a very dull

and uninteresting work from the information, scanty during his period, which the *Annual Register* and *Parliamentary History* afforded. If a greater annalist than he do not arise to do justice to his merits, the fame even of Marlborough will never descend, at least in its full proportions, to future generations.

It is deeply to be regretted that Sir James Mackintosh did not complete his long-cherished design of continuing Hume's history. No man, since Hume's time, possessed so many qualifications for the undertaking. To an incomparable talent for depicting character, and a luminous philosophic mind, he joined great erudition, extensive knowledge, and a practical acquaintance both with statesmen and ordinary life. Though he was a party man, and had early taken, in his *Vindiciæ Gallicæ*, a decided part against Burke in apology of the French Revolution, yet he possessed great candour of mind and had magnanimity enough, in maturer years, to admit that he had been far led astray in early life by the inexperience and ardour of youth. When a man possesses this equanimity and justice of mind, it is wholly immaterial to what political party he belongs, and with what preconceived opinions he undertakes the task of narrating events. Truth will shine out in every page—justice will preside over every decision—facts will inevitably lead to the correct conclusion. It is perverted genius, skilful partisanship, imagination brought to the aid of party, and learning dedicated to the support of delusion, which is really to be dreaded. Mackintosh's mind was essentially philosophical: this appears in every page of his Life by his sons—one of the most interesting pieces of biography in the English language. His characters of statesmen, orators, and poets, in England during the eighteenth century, chiefly written at Bombay, or during the voyage home, are perhaps unparalleled in our language for justice and felicity. They show how richly stored his mind was; how correctly his taste had been formed on the best models; how vast a stock of images, comparisons, and associations, he brought to bear on the events and characters which he passed in survey. He had not a poetical mind, and was destitute of a pictorial eye. His history, therefore, never would have been adorned by those moving scenes,

those graphic pictures, which are the life and soul of the highest style of history, and which have given immortality to the writings of Livy, Sallust, and Tacitus. But the eighteenth century, though by no means destitute of events calling for such imaginative powers, has perhaps less of them than any equal period in English history. What is mainly required for it is a philosophic mind, to appreciate the effects of the great convulsions of the preceding century, and an impartial judgment, to discern the causes which were preparing the still more terrible catastrophe of the nineteenth. Mackintosh possessed these great and valuable qualities in a very high degree; and his history, if he had succeeded in completing it, would unquestionably have taken its place with those of Hume, Robertson, and Gibbon. The thing really to be lamented is, that the time which Providence allotted to him, and which was amply sufficient for the completion even of so great an undertaking, was wasted amidst the attractions and frivolity of high London society; and that, more even than the heroic Swede in captivity, he was

> "Condemn'd a needy suppliant to wait,
> While ladies interpose, and slaves debate."

Lord Mahon has conferred essential obligations on English history. He has brought to the annals of the British empire during the eighteenth century, qualities nearly the reverse of those of Mackintosh, but which are, nevertheless, not less essential than those of the Scotch philosopher, for a right appreciation and correct delineation of the period. He is a scholar, a gentleman, and a man of the world. Possessed of great knowledge of his subject, vigorous application, and a classical turn of expression, he has united to these qualities those, in historical writers, still rarer, of a practical acquaintance with statesmen, both in Parliament and private life, and a thorough knowledge of the leading public characters, both military, literary, and dignified, of his own time. Every one must see what valuable qualities these are, for a correct appreciation and faithful narrative of the history of England during the eighteenth century—great part of which was not distinguished by any enthusiasm or impulse in the public mind, and during which the springs of events were to be

found rather in the intrigues of the court, the coteries of the nobility, or the cabals of Parliament, than in any great movements of the people, or mighty heaves of the human mind. In truth, no one but a person moving in the sphere and possessed of the connexions which Lord Mahon enjoys, could either obtain the knowledge, or understand the real springs of events, during a great part of the period he has embraced in his work. But still the history of the eighteenth century remains to be written. Lord Mahon has remarkable talents as a biographer; his account of the Rebellion in 1745, and subsequent adventures of Charles Edward, is not surpassed in interest by anything in the English language, and is justly referred to by Sismondi, in his *History of France*, as by far the best account of that interesting episode in British history. But his *History of England* is "Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire," rather than history itself. We want in his pages the general views drawn from particular facts, the conclusions applicable to all ages, which mark the philosophic historian. His volumes will always occupy a distinguished place in English literature, and will prove of essential service to every succeeding writer who may undertake to treat of the period which they embrace; but the mantle of Hume is destined to fall on other shoulders.

Walpole's correspondence and memoirs, in many respects, are highly valuable, and will always be referred to, as throwing much important light on the parliamentary and court transactions of the middle of the eighteenth century. They develop much that was known to no other man, at least to no other with whose writings we are yet acquainted, who has left any record of his information to future times. In this respect his memoirs are invaluable. It is astonishing how much information there is afloat in the higher political circles, in every age, which is generally known at the time to all who frequent them, which, on that very account, perishes altogether with that generation. No one thinks of committing it to paper any more than he does the stages to London, or the names of the months in the year, or the usual forms of society—because every one knows them. Thus the information, often of essential value to future historians, perishes like the beauty of the

women which has adorned the age, unless some garrulous gossip in his correspondence or memoirs has been trifling enough for his own age, and wise enough for the next, to commit it to paper. Horace Walpole was that garrulous gossip. His correspondence with Sir H. Mann, embracing altogether a period of twenty years, which had previously been published, and his *Memoirs of the Reign of George III.*, which have recently appeared, contain an account, tinged no doubt by strong party feelings, but still an account of a very long and important period of English history; and abound not only in curious facts, interesting to the antiquary or the biographer, but contain many important revelations of essential value to the national or general historian of the period.

The praise of these volumes, however, must be taken with much alloy. Horace Walpole was a man of the world and a courtier; he had quick natural parts and much acquired discernment. He was a good scholar, was fond of antiquities, and a passionate admirer of curiosities, which he collected with indefatigable industry, and no small success, from every quarter. He had lived too long in the political and the great world not to have learned its selfishness and appreciated its heartlessness; not to have become acquainted with many political secrets, and seen enough of political baseness. He had considerable powers of observation, and occasionally makes a profound remark, especially on the selfish tendencies and the secret springs of the human heart. His characters are all drawn from the life; and often with great power both of observation and expression. But he had not sufficient steadiness of thought or purpose to achieve anything considerable, or draw any important conclusions even from the multifarious information of which he was master, or the powers of observation which he possessed. There was nothing grand or generous in his composition. No elevated thoughts, no lofty aspirations, no patriotic resolves, are visible in his writings. Political *insouciance* was his prevailing habitude of mind; an invincible tendency to "*laissez aller*" the basis of his character. But he did not lie by and observe events, like Metternich and Talleyrand, to become embued with their tendency, and ultimately gain the mastery of them; he let them take their course, and in reality cared very little for the result. He was an epicurean, not a stoic,

in politics. His character approaches very nearly to that which common report has assigned to Lord Melbourne. He had strong party attachments, and still stronger party antipathies; he seems to have devoutly swallowed the creed so common to party men of every age, that all those on his side were noble and virtuous, and all those against him base and selfish. He had much of the wit of Erasmus, but he had also a full share of his aversion to martyrdom. But we shall find abundance of patriotic declamation, cutting invective, and querulous complaint. The misfortune is, that the declamation is always against the triumph of the Tories; the invective against the astuteness of Lord Bute; the complaint against the disunion of the Whig leaders, or the Tory influences at court.

There is a class of readers considerable among men, numerous among women, in whom the appetite for scandal is so strong that it altogether overleaps the bounds of time and faction, and seizes with nearly as much avidity on the private gossip of the past as of the present age. With such persons, the next best thing to discovering a *faux pas* among their acquaintances, is to hear of it among their grandmothers; the greatest comfort, next to laying bare political baseness in their rulers, is to discover it in the government which ruled their fathers. We confess we do not belong to this class. We have little taste for scandal, either in the male or female great world. We see so much of selfishness, envy, hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness around us, that their details have not only entirely lost the charm of novelty, but become absolutely sickening by repetition. To such readers the first volume of Wraxall's Memoirs must be a precious morsel. We never doubted that the anecdotes he told were in the main true, from the moment we saw the *Quarterly* and *Edinburgh Reviews* combined in running him down. Nothing but truth could have produced so portentous an alliance. They combined in saying that what he said was a libel. Doubtless they were right, upon the principle that the greater the truth the greater the libel. To such readers we would strongly recommend the *Memoirs and Correspondence of Walpole.* They will find a mass of scandal adequate to satiate the most voracious appetite;

evidence of general corruption sufficient to satisfy the most vehement political opponent.

It is in the evidence which these volumes afford of the general corruption of Great Britain during the greater part of the eighteenth century that, in our humble opinion, the most valuable lesson of political wisdom is to be found which that period conveys. We rise from the long series of his amusing volumes with the firm conviction that in his days all parties were base, and all statesmen in a certain sense corrupt. They absolutely render the common story credible, that during the days of Sir R. Walpole, when the members of Parliament were invited to dine with the prime-minister, each found a £500 bank-note under his napkin when he took it off his plate at dinner. At any rate the long, and in many respects beneficent, reign of that veteran statesman was maintained entirely by patronage and corruption. Horace Walpole himself tells us that it was commonly said, at the accession of George III. in 1761, that the country was governed by two hundred noblemen, who received more from the Government than they gave to it. The influence of these two hundred noblemen in their respective counties or boroughs was maintained by the most unsparing use, sometimes of actual bribery, always of Government patronage, to secure the adherence of every political partisan, even of the very lowest grade. With truth it might be said of England at that time, as it was of France before the Revolution, that "no one was so great as to be beyond the hatred of a minister, nor so little as to escape the notice of a comptroller of excise." Every office in the state, from the prime-minister down to the humblest *employé* in the post-office or customs, was conferred to secure the fidelity of political supporters. Liberality to opponents, the public good, fair dealing, the claims of long service to the country, destitution, charity, noble descent, patriotic conduct, were alike scouted, and by common consent banished from the consideration of public men. Political support was the one thing needful; and to secure it nothing was grudged, without it nothing was to be got. Johnson's well-known definition of an exciseman shows the profound indignation which this universal and unsparing system of corruption excited among

the few resolute and generous spirits which its long continuance had left in the country. We heard nothing of the evils of this system from the Whigs during the seventy years subsequent to the Revolution, when it was practised by themselves; but we have heard enough of it from them since that time, when the state machine they had erected has been worked by their opponents.

The Emperor Nicholas said to the Marquis Custine, with much bitterness and some truth—"I can understand a democracy, where the popular voice is everything, and the magistrates implicitly obey its mandates. I can understand a despotism, where the monarch's voice is everything, and the people merely obey his commands. But a constitutional monarchy, where the people are mocked by a show of liberty which they do not possess, and bribed into submission by corruption, by which they are really degraded—that I do not understand, and I hope in God never again to see it. I had enough of it in the government of Poland." Amidst all the blessings of a limited and representative monarchy, which no one who surveys the mighty empire of Great Britain can dispute, there is, it must be confessed, some truth in this caustic remark. Walpole has told us of the astonishing extent to which corruption was carried in his day by Lord Bute and the Tories, who got possession of the corrupting government in 1761, which the Whigs had been constructing since 1688. The untoward issue of the war, which terminated in 1749 in the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, the disgraceful commencement of the Seven Years' War, unjustly expiated by the blood of Byng, gloriously redeemed by the genius of Chatham; the disasters of the American contest; the frequent defeats of the first years of the Revolutionary war, afford decisive evidence how deeply this degrading and corrupting system had entered into the vitals of the nation during the eighteenth century. Every one knows that America was lost in consequence of the imbecility and selfish views of the commanders, whom the corrupt system of government in Great Britain had raised to the head of affairs. On several occasions they might, with a little energy, have terminated the war with glory to themselves and their country. The disasters of Flanders in 1793 and 1794 were in a great measure owing to the same cause.

During peace influential imbecility is constantly rising to the head of affairs, and the consequences immediately appear on the first breaking out of hostilities. Nothing but the pressure and disasters of war can drive Government out of the inveterate vice of purchasing parliamentary support by the promotion of incapable and improper persons. The Whigs, since they were expelled from the helm of affairs in 1761, have been constantly declaiming against this system, which they themselves had introduced and matured during the preceding seventy years; and the clamour they raised at last became so violent that it brought about the great organic change of 1832. But no sooner were they again seated in power than the same system was not only pursued by them, but extended: patronage was augmented in every possible way; a new machine for influence, adapted to the time—that of commissions—was introduced and largely worked, and promotions in every department were rigidly confined to political partisans. It has been a frequent subject of complaint against the Tory government, both before the Revolution in 1832, and on their return to power in 1841, that they were too liberal to their opponents, and forgetful of their friends, in the dispensing of the public patronage; and we have only to take up the Red Book to see that this praise or imputation justly belongs to them. But no man alive ever heard of a Whig, during the ten years they were in power, being accused of giving anything to a Tory. The saying, which had passed into a proverb during that period, that "the Whigs could do with impunity many things to which the Tories could never set their faces," proves how rapidly this degrading system of official corruption was again spreading, during the Whig tenure of power, in domestic government. The disasters of Affghanistan, the shaking of our power in India, the abortive first two years' hostilities with China, show with what dreadful danger it was attended to our external power, and even national existence.

We have said that it is the decisive mark of a party writer to ascribe political and private vices to his opponents, from which he represents his own side as exempt; and we have immediately afterwards said, that the wide-spread corruption, and constant promotion of influential imbecility,

which, ever since 1688, has been the bane of Great Britain, and the chief, if not the sole, cause of all the disasters we have undergone, and of nine-tenths of the debts we have contracted, is mainly to be ascribed to the Whigs, who, during the long period of seventy years, immediately subsequent to the Revolution, were exclusively in power, and had the entire moulding of the constitution, both in church and state, in their hands. Having taken the mote out of our neighbour's eye, we proceed to take the beam out of our own. We hasten to show, that we do not ascribe greater political baseness to one party than another. We will not follow the example of Walpole, who represents Chatham, and all his Whig followers, as patriotic angels; Bute, and all his Tory supporters, as selfish devils. We assume it as the basis of all just or rational historical discussion, that, though there may be a wide and most important difference in the beneficial or ruinous effects with which their measures are attended, the real character, the moral purity of the motives, of men of opposite parties, in the same age, is much alike. There is, indeed, a wide difference in the virtue and public spirit of different ages, and of men in the same community under different circumstances; but in the same age, and under the same circumstances, they are very nearly similar.

The patriotism of Regulus and Fabricius was very different from that which followed the insurrection of the Gracchi; but Sylla and Marius, Cæsar and Pompey, differed, if their real motives are considered, very little from each other. The same result would probably have followed the triumphs of either. There is no such thing as all the sheep being on one side and all the goats on another, in the same country at the same time. The proportion of good and bad men, of generous and base motives, among the Roundheads and Cavaliers, was much the same. The cabal which was framing a government of despotic power for Charles II., was doubtless selfish and tyrannical; but Algernon Sidney, and the whole patriots who opposed them, except Lord Russell, were quietly taking, the whole time, bribes from Louis XIV. Severity was doubtless exercised in the punishment of the leaders, some of whom were noble and high-minded men, of the Rye-House Plot; but that

was only in retaliation of the still greater atrocities consequent on the fictitious Popish plots, and the perjury of Titus Oates. The Revolution of 1688 was, doubtless, brought about, as a whole, by necessity and patriotic intentions; but Churchill proved a traitor to his benefactor and king, and betrayed his trust to promote that revolution—a crime as deep as that for which Ney justly suffered in the gardens of the Luxembourg—and the blackness of which all the glories of Marlborough have not been able to efface. The government of Lord Bute and Lord North was doubtless mainly based on the influence of official or parliamentary patronage, and the evils of that corruption clearly appeared in the disasters of the American war; but these Tory noblemen only carried on the system invented, and brought to perfection, during the seventy years that the Whigs had enjoyed a monopoly of power.

It is a first principle in politics, says Sismondi, that all classes which have not constitutionally the means of resistance will be oppressed. There can be no doubt that this is true; and it is not less true, that all power which is not systematically watched will become corrupt. It is these principles which explain the universal and wide-spread corruption that overran the country for a century after the Revolution; and they point to a conclusion of the very highest importance in political science. Direct or tyrannical power, by means of the prerogative, or the simple will of the sovereign, having become impossible, in consequence of the safeguards established by the Great Rebellion and the Revolution, and the disposition to tyranny and abuse remaining the same, from the corrupt tendency of the human heart, the system of gaining a majority, both in Parliament and in the constituencies, by means of Government influence and official corruption, became the acknowledged, and probably unavoidable, basis of government. During the seventy years that the Whigs were in power, they brought this system to perfection, and extended its ramifications into the remotest corners of the kingdom. A majority of the House of Peers, in the Whig interest, amply provided with emoluments, offices, and dignities, got possession of so many boroughs and counties, that they secured a majority in the Commons also, and got the entire command of Government.

The sovereigns on the throne—men of little capacity, imperfectly acquainted with English, unable, from that cause, even to preside at the meetings of their own cabinet, and strongly opposed by an ardent and generous, because disinterested, party in the country—became mere puppets in their hands, and rendered the crown nearly destitute of all real or independent weight in the kingdom.

The natural check in a free country upon this corrupt system, into which every constitutional monarchy has so strong a tendency to run, is found in the vigorous opposition and incessant watchfulness of the people. It is this which has been so powerful a restraint upon the abuses of government during the last half century; and which has now become so strong, that the common complaint is, that, in all important appointments at least, the Tory Ministry are forgetful of their friends, and select the persons to be appointed from the ranks of their enemies. But this salutary check upon bad government did not exist during the first half of the eighteenth century; or rather, it existed only to fan and augment the inclination, already sufficiently strong, to corrupt administration on the part of the Whig oligarchy, who had got possession of the helm. The popular party were now in power; their leaders had the disposal of everything, and therefore not a whisper escaped their lips, as to the degrading system which was so fast spreading in the country. The Tories, who were in opposition, were a discredited and defeated party. They had got into ugly company—they had the axe impending over them. The unsuccessful result of the rebellions of 1715 and 1745 had, as is always the case, not only greatly augmented the strength of the ruling government, but it had rendered the Tories, who were in great part, and probably justly, suspected of a leaning to the rebels, to the last degree obnoxious to a large majority of the English people. Religious feeling combined with political antipathy and personal terror to produce this emotion. The Tories were associated, in the popular mind, with Jacobites and rebels; with Popish mummery and national antipathy; with the fires of Smithfield and the defeat of Prestonpans; with Scotch ascendency and revenge for the blood shed at Carlisle; with breechless Highlanders and Protestant confiscation. Thus the Tories,

as a popular party, capable of exercising any effective control on the vices and corruptions of administration, were practically extinct. Meanwhile the popular party in England, steeped in corruption, and gorged with the spoils of the state, which the expensive system of government, introduced with the Revolution, had done so much to augment, was effectually gagged, and was enjoying its lucrative abuses in silence. This is the true explanation and real cause of the prodigious corruptions which pervaded every department of the state, and—what was worse—every class in the country, during the seventy years which followed the Revolution, and which all but proved fatal to anything like patriotic spirit or public virtue in England. The two powers, that of the government and the people, usually opposing each other, had come to draw in the same direction, and they raised between them a spring-tide of corruption, which well-nigh submerged the state.

There can be no question that, if this degrading system of government—the necessary and never-failing result of successful revolution—had continued for a generation longer, it would have proved altogether fatal to Great Britain. But, fortunately for the country, George III. and his advisers, from the very first moment of his accession to the throne, set his face against the party which had introduced and matured this system of government; and their efforts, though after a severe struggle, were successful. This was the turning-point of English history; upon the success of that attempt the future character of the government and of the people mainly depended. It, for the first time since the Revolution, restored the government to its proper position—it rested it, in its ultimate effects, on Property, and put Numbers in opposition. This is the only proper basis of good government—for, without property ruling, there can be no stability in administration; and without numbers watching, there is no security against the multiplication of abuses. The corrupt system of Sir R. Walpole, and the preceding Administrations, had arisen from the popular party—that is, numbers—having become the ruling power, and, of course, appropriated to themselves the whole spoils of the state. Instantly their watching became equal to nothing, and every abuse was perpetrated without either exposure or

complaint. There were no Wilkeses nor Juniuses to lash the vices of Administration from 1688 to 1761, when the Whigs were in power; though that was, beyond all question, the most corrupt period of English history. But they appeared fast enough, and did infinite good, as soon as the Tories got possession of the public treasury. This is the true secret of the unbounded corruption of the government of the Convention and Directory in France, of the rapid return to a corrupt system during the ten years of Whig power which succeeded the downfall of the Tories in 1830, and of the establishment of Louis Philippe's dynasty, now, on the basis of one hundred and thirty-eight thousand offices, which Tocqueville tells us are at the disposal of the ruling power at the Tuileries. It is not that the popular leaders are worse men, or by nature more inclined to evil, than their Conservative opponents, but that, when they are elevated into power by the result of a revolution or social convulsion, the controlling has become the ruling power; its leaders and followers alike profit by corruption and mal-administration; and therefore there is no longer any possible restraint on abuse. It is not that the Conservative leaders are by nature better men, or more inclined to eschew evil and do good than their popular opponents; but that, as the basis of their government is property, which necessarily is vested in comparatively few hands, they are, of course, opposed and narrowly watched by numbers; and thus they are deterred from doing evil, from the dread of its consequences recoiling upon themselves. The selfish passions, in these circumstances, come to counteract each other, because they both actuate opposite parties. And this observation explains the cause of the remark by Montesquieu, which the experience of all ages has proved to be well founded, "that the most degrading despotisms recorded in history have been those which have immediately followed a successful revolution."

The clearest proof of how strongly, and all but indelibly, corruption and abuses had become engrained, as it were, on the practice of the English constitution, is to be found in their long continuance and pernicious effects after the popular party had been thrown back to their proper duty of watching and checking the abuses of government, and despite the prodigious efforts which were made, and the vast talent

which was exerted, to expose and decry it. Walpole tells us enough of the corrupt means by which Lord Bute's authority was maintained, and of the discreditable intrigues by which succeeding Administrations were raised up and cast down. Wilkes and Junius exposed, in cutting libels, and with caustic severity, their real or supposed continuance in a subsequent part of the reign of George III.; Burke and Fox declaimed in a voice of thunder against the vices of Lord North's administration; and the disasters of that untoward period demonstrate but too clearly, that the radical vice of parliamentary influence had almost banished talent and ability from the public service. Every one knows that commissions in the army and navy were bestowed on children, as the mere price of support to Government; and that, when the little hirelings of corruption were sent forth into the public service, they were utterly ignorant, for the most part, of even the most elementary parts of their duty. The same system continued during the early years of the Revolutionary war; and we all know with what disastrous effects it was then attended. But the Whig orators and patriots, with all their acuteness and zeal, forgot to tell us one thing, which, however, it most behoved them to have told—and that is, that it was themselves who had formed and habituated the nation to this degrading system. They have forgot to tell us that they had the framing of the constitution in church and state, after the Revolution of 1688; that their power was, for nearly a century, entirely paramount; and that, if the system of government had come, during that time, to rest on corrupt influences, it was they, and they alone, who are responsible for the practical moulding of the constitution into such a form.

No man who knows the human heart, or has had any experience, either of public characters in his own, or historic shades in any former age, will suppose that the Conservative party are more inclined in their hearts to pure and virtuous administration than their popular opponents; but, nevertheless, there can be no question that their government, generally speaking, is much more pure, and its effects far more beneficial. Decisive proof of this exists in English history during the nineteenth century. It took nearly forty years of incessant effort on the part of the Tories to eradi-

cate the harvest of corruption which sprang up since 1761, from the seeds so profusely sown by their predecessors during the seventy years before that period; and, unless they had been aided by the disasters of the American, and the perilous chances of the Revolutionary contest, it is probable all their efforts would have been unsuccessful. But when, by the firmness of George III., and the talent of Mr Pitt, the contest for political supremacy was at an end, and government was rested on its true basis—that of property being the ruling, and numbers the controlling power—when the Tory party, freed from the influence of their old Jacobite recollections, had rallied with sincere loyalty round the throne, and the Whigs, having lost the glittering prospect of a return to power and corruption, had been driven to seek for support in the passions of the people, what a marvellous display of public virtue and strength did the empire afford! Search the annals of the world, you will find nothing superior, few things equal, to the patriotism, public spirit, and generous devotion of the latter period of the Revolutionary war. Its unequalled triumphs prove this; the biographies of its great men, which are daily issuing from the press, show from what a noble and elevated spirit these triumphs had sprung. They conquered because they were worthy to conquer. The burning patriotism of Nelson; the prophetic courage of Pitt; the spotless heart of Collingwood; the stern resolve of St Vincent; the steady judgment of Eldon; the moral firmness of Castlereagh; the unconquerable resolution of Wellington, shine forth as the most conspicuous ornaments of this brilliant period. But these men, great as they were, did not stand alone. They were in prominent situations, and have thence acquired immortal fame; but they were followed and supported by hundreds and thousands, animated with the same spirit, and possessing, if called forth, the same abilities. England, at that period, seemed to have reached that epoch in national life, "brief and speedily to perish," as Tacitus says, when the firmness of aristocracy had given invincible resolution, and the energy of democracy inexhaustible vigour to the state; when we had the tenacity of nobles without their pride, and the vehemence of the people without their licentiousness.

The Emperor Nicholas, therefore, judged too hastily when he condemned all free countries and constitutional monarchies as necessarily the seats of corruption. It is no wonder he thought so from the experience he had of them, and that which the greater part of such governments, in his time, had afforded. If we had judged of constitutional monarchy and the cause of freedom from the history of England from 1688 to 1763, we should have said the same. But the subsequent history of the British empire has revealed the real cause of these general and widespread abuses. It has shown that they arose not necessarily from the triumph of freedom, but accidentally from government, in consequence of that triumph, having for a long period been established on a wrong basis. The contending powers, whose opposition produces equilibrium, had been brought to draw in the same direction, and thence the spring-tide of corruption. A constitutional monarchy is not necessarily based on patronage ; it is so only when the popular party are in power. That party, having, as a whole, little or no interest in the property of the state, can be retained in obedience, and hindered from urging on the revolutionary movement, only by being well supplied with offices. It is like a beast of prey, which must be constantly gorged to be kept quiet. But the holders of property need no such degrading motive to keep them steady to the cause of order. They are retained there by their own private interest ; by their deep stake in the maintenance of tranquillity ; by their desire to transmit their estates unimpaired to their descendants. They are as certain, in the general case, of supporting the cause of order, and its guardians at the helm of a state, as the passengers in a ship are of standing by the pilot and crew who are to save them from the waves. The true, the legitimate, the honourable support of a Conservative government, is to be found in that numerous class of men who have no favours to ask, who would disdain to accept any gratification, who adhere to the cause of order because it is that of peace, of religion, of themselves, and of their children. It is a sense of the strength of these bonds, a knowledge of the independent and disinterested support which they are certain of receiving, which enables a Conservative Administration so often to neglect its supporters in the dis-

tribution of the public patronage, and seek for merit and worth in the ranks of its opponents. A democratic government can never do this, because the passions and interests of the great bulk of its supporters are adverse to the preservation of property ; and therefore they can be kept to their colours, and hindered from clamouring for those measures which its leaders feel to be destructive, only by the exclusive enjoyment and entire monopoly of all the patronage of the state.

Without undervaluing, then, the effects of the Revolution of 1688 ; without discrediting the motives of many of the patriots who combined to shake off the oppressive tyranny and Romish bigotry of James II., it may safely by affirmed, that it was George III., Lord Bute, and Mr Pitt, who put the British constitution upon its right, and the only durable and beneficial basis, and worked out the Revolution itself to its appropriate and beneficent effects. This is the great and important moral of English history during the eighteenth century ; this is the conclusion forced on the mind by the perusal of *Walpole's Memoirs*, and his vehement abuse of Lord Bute and George III. for their dismissal of the Whigs from power. Doubtless, they acted from selfish motives in doing so. The king wanted to regain his prerogative, the minister to secure his power ; but still it was, on the part of both, a step in the right direction. But for the resolute stand which they made against the Whig oligarchy —but for their wisdom in throwing themselves on the property of the nation to withstand its debasement, a domineering party would have become omnipotent, the people would have been irrecoverably plunged in the slough of corruption, and the liberties of England lost for ever, according to all former experience, in the firmly established despotism consequent on a successful revolution. George III. said, on the first decisive parliamentary division which gave a majority to the Tories in 1761—"At length, then, we have a king on the throne in England." Posterity will add—At length the foundations of a free constitution were laid on a durable and practicable basis.

MADAME DE STAEL

[BLACKWOOD'S MAGAZINE, June 1837]

Amidst the deluge of new and ephemeral publications under which the press both in France and England is groaning, and the woful depravity of public taste, in all branches of literature, which in the former country has followed the Revolution of the Three Glorious Days, it is not the least important part of the duty of all those who have any share, however inconsiderable, in the direction of the objects to which public thought is to be applied, to recur from time to time to the great and standard works of a former age; and from amidst the dazzling light of passing meteors in the lower regions of the atmosphere, to endeavour to direct the public gaze to those fixed luminaries whose radiance in the higher heavens shines, and ever will shine, in imperishable lustre. From our sense of the importance and utility of this attempt, we are not to be deterred by the common remark, that these authors are in everybody's hands; that their works are read at school, and their names have become as household sounds. We know that many things are read at school which are forgotten at college; and many things learned at college which are unhappily and permanently discarded in later years; and that there are many authors whose names are as household sounds, whose works for that very reason are as a strange and unknown tongue. Every one has heard of Racine and Molière, of Bossuet and Fénélon, of Voltaire and Rousseau, of Chateaubriand and Madame de Stael, of Pascal and Rabelais. We would beg to ask even our best informed and most learned readers, with how many of their works they are really familiar; how many of their felicitous expressions have sunk into their

recollections ; how many of their ideas are engraven on their memory ? Others may possess more retentive memories, or more extensive reading than we do ; but we confess, when we apply such a question, even to the constant study of thirty years, we feel not a little mortified at the time which has been misapplied, and the brilliant ideas once obtained from others which have now faded from the recollection, and should rejoice much to obtain from others that retrospect of past greatness which we propose ourselves to lay before our readers.

Every one now is so constantly in the habit of reading the new publications, of devouring the fresh productions of the press, that we forget the extraordinary superiority of standard works ; and are obliged to go back to the studies of our youth for that superlative enjoyment which arises from the perusal of authors, where every sentence is thought and often every word conception ; where new trains of contemplation or emotion are awakened in every page, and the volume is closed almost every minute to meditate on the novelty or justice of the reflections which arise from its study. And it is not on the first perusal of these authors that this exquisite pleasure is obtained. In the heyday of youth and strength, when imagination is ardent, and the world unknown, it is the romance of the story, or the general strain of the argument which carries the reader on, and many of the finest and most spiritual reflections are overlooked or unappreciated. But in later years, when life has been experienced, and joy and sorrow felt, when the memory is stored with recollections, and the imagination with images, it is reflection and observation which constitute the chief attraction in composition.

The two great eras of French prose literature are those of Louis XIV. and the Revolution. If the former can boast of Bossuet, the latter can appeal to Chateaubriand ; if the former still shines in the purest lustre in Fénélon, the latter may boast the more fervent pages and varied genius of De Stael ; if the former is supreme in the tragic and comic muse, and can array Racine, Corneille, and Molière, against the transient Lilliputians of the romantic school, the latter can show in the poetry and even the prose of Lamartine a condensation of feeling, a depth of pathos and energy of

thought, which can never be reached but in an age which has undergone the animating episodes, the heart-stirring feelings, consequent on social convulsion. In the branches of literature which depend on the relations of men to each other—history, politics, historical philosophy and historical romance, the superiority of the modern school is so prodigious, that it is impossible to find a parallel to it in former days; and even the dignified language and eagle glance of the Bishop of Meaux sink into insignificance, compared to the vast ability which, in inferior minds, experience and actual suffering have brought to bear on the investigation of public affairs. Modern writers were for long at a loss to understand the cause which had given such superior pathos, energy, and practical wisdom to the historians of antiquity; but the French Revolution at once explained the mystery. When modern times were brought into collision with the passions and the suffering consequent on democratic ascendency and social convulsion, they were not long of feeling the truths which experience had taught to ancient times, and acquiring the power of vivid description and condensed yet fervent narrative by which the great historians of antiquity are characterised.

At the head of the modern prose writers of France, we place Madame de Stael, Chateaubriand, and Guizot. The general style of the two first and the most imaginative of these writers—De Stael and Chateaubriand—is essentially different from that of Bossuet, Fénélon, and Massillon. We have no longer either the thoughts, the language, or the images of these great and dignified writers. With the pompous grandeur of the Grande Monarque; with the awful splendour of the palace, and the irresistible power of the throne; with the superb magnificence of Versailles, its marbles, halls, and forests of statues, have passed away the train of thought by which the vices and corruption then chiefly prevalent in society were combated by these worthy soldiers of the militia of Christ. Strange to say, the ideas of that despotic age are more condemnatory of princes, more eulogistic of the people, more confirmatory of the principles which, if pushed to their legitimate consequences, lead to democracy, than those of the age when the sovereignty of the people was actually established. In their eloquent

declamations the wisdom, justice, and purity of the masses are the constant subject of eulogy ; almost all social and political evils are traced to the corruptions of courts and the vices of kings. The applause of the people, the condemnation of rulers, in *Telemachus*, often resembles rather the frothy declamations of the Tribune in favour of the sovereign multitude, than the severe lessons addressed by a courtly prelate to the heir of a despotic throne. With a fearless courage, worthy of the highest commendation, and very different from the base adulation of modern times to the Baal of popular power, Bossuet, Massillon, and Bourdaloue incessantly rang in the ears of their courtly auditory the equality of mankind in the sight of heaven, and the awful words of judgment to come. These imaginary and Utopian effusions now excite a smile, even in the most youthful student ; and a suffering age, taught by the experienced evils of democratic ascendency, has now learned to appreciate, as they deserve, the profound and caustic sayings in which Aristotle, Sallust, and Tacitus have delivered to future ages the condensed wisdom on the instability and tyranny of the popular rule, which ages of calamity had brought home to the sages of antiquity.

In Madame de Stael and Chateaubriand we have incomparably more originality and variety of thought ; far more just and experienced views of human affairs ; far more condensed wisdom, which the statesman and the philosopher may treasure in their memories, than in the great writers of the age of Louis XIV. We see at once in their productions that we are dealing with those who speak from experience of human affairs ; to whom years of suffering have brought centuries of wisdom ; and who in the stern school of adversity have learned to abjure both much of the fanciful El Dorado speculations of preceding philosophy, and the perilous effusions of succeeding republicanism. Though the one was by birth and habit an aristocrat of the ancient and now decaying school, and the other, a Liberal nursed at the feet of the great Gamaliel of the Revolution, yet there is no material difference in their political conclusions ; so completely does a close observation of the progress of a revolution induce the same conclusions in minds of the highest stamp, with whatever early prepossessions the survey may

have been originally commenced. The *Dix Années d'Exil*, and the *Observations on the French Revolution* might have been written by Chateaubriand, and Madame de Stael would have little wherefrom to dissent in the *Monarchie selon la Charte*, or the later political writings of her illustrious rival.

It is by their works of imagination, taste, and criticism, however, that these immortal writers are principally celebrated, and it is with them that we propose to commence this critical survey. Their names are universally known—*Corinne*, *Delphine*, *De l'Allemagne*, the *Dix Années d'Exil*, and *De la Litterature*, are as familiar in sound, at least, to our ears, as the *Génie du Christianisme*, the *Itinéraire*, the *Martyrs*, *Atala et René*, of the far travelled pilgrim of expiring feudalism are to our memories. Each has beauties of the very highest cast in this department, and yet their excellences are so various, that we know not to which to award the palm. If driven to discriminate between them, we should say that De Stael has more sentiment, Chateaubriand more imagination ; that the former has deeper knowledge of human feelings, and the latter more varied and animated pictures of human manners ; that the charm of the first consists chiefly in the just and profound views of life, its changes and emotions, with which her works abound, and the fascination of the last in the brilliant phantasmagoria of actual scenes, impressions, and events which his writings exhibit. No one can exceed Madame de Stael in the expression of the sentiment or poetry of nature, or the development of the varied and storied associations which historical scenes or monuments never fail to awaken in the cultivated mind ; but in the delineation of the actual features she exhibits, or the painting of the various and gorgeous scenery or objects she presents, she is greatly inferior to the author of the *Genius of Christianity*. She speaks emotion to the heart, not pictures to the eye. Chateaubriand, on the other hand, has dipped his pencil in the finest and most radiant hues of nature. With a skill surpassing even that of the Great Magician of the North, he depicts all the most splendid scenes of both hemispheres ; and, seizing with the inspiration of genius on the really characteristic features of the boundless variety of objects he

has visited, brings them before us with a force and fidelity which it is impossible to surpass. After all, however, on rising from a perusal of the great works of these two authors, it is hard to say which has left the most indelible impression on the mind; for if the one has accumulated a store of brilliant pictures which have never yet been rivalled, the other has drawn from the objects on which she has touched all the most profound emotions which life could awaken; and if the first leaves a gorgeous scene painted on the mind, the latter has engraved a durable impression on the heart.

Corinne is not to be regarded as a novel. Boarding-school girls and youths just fledged from college may admire it as such, and dwell with admiration on the sorrows of the heroine and the faithlessness of Lord Nelvil; but considered in that view it has glaring faults, both in respect of fancy, probability, and story, and will bear no comparison either with the great novels of Sir Walter Scott, or the secondary productions of his numerous imitators. The real view in which to regard it is as a picture of Italy; its inhabitants, feelings, and recollections; its cloudless skies and glassy seas; its forest-clad hills and sunny vales; its umbrageous groves and mouldering forms; its heart-inspiring ruins and deathless scenes. As such, it is superior to any work on that subject which has appeared in any European language. Nowhere else shall we find so rich and glowing an intermixture of sentiment with description; of deep feeling for the beauty of art, with a correct perception of its leading principles; of historical lore with poetical fancy; of ardour in the cause of social amelioration, with charity to the individuals who, under unfortunate institutions, are chained to a life of indolence and pleasure. Beneath the glowing sun and azure skies of Italy the authoress has imbibed the real modern Italian spirit; she exhibits in the mouth of her heroine all that devotion to art, that rapturous regard to antiquity, that *insouciance* in ordinary life, and constant *besoin* of fresh excitement by which that remarkable people are distinguished from any other at present in Europe. She paints them as they really are; living on the recollection of the past, feeding on the glories of their double set of illustrious ancestors; at times exulting in the recollection of the legions which subdued the world, at others recurring with pride to the glorious

though brief days of modern art; mingling the names of Cæsar, Pompey, Cicero, and Virgil with those of Michael Angelo, Raphael, Buonarotti, and Correggio; repeating with admiration the stanzas of Tasso as they glide through the deserted palaces of Venice, and storing their minds with the rich creations of Ariosto's fancy as they gaze on the stately monuments of Rome.

Not less vividly has she portrayed, in the language, feelings, and character of her heroine, the singular intermixture with these animating recollections of all the frivolity which has rendered impossible, without a fresh impregnation of northern vigour, the regeneration of Italian society. We see in her pages, as we witness in real life, talents the most commanding, beauty the most fascinating, graces the most captivating, devoted to no other object but the excitement of a transient passion; infidelity itself subjected to certain restraints, and boasting of its fidelity to one attachment; whole classes of society incessantly occupied with no other object but the gratification of vanity, the thraldom of attachment, or the imperious demands of beauty, and the strongest craving of cultivated life, the *besoin d'aimer*, influencing, for the best part of their lives, the higher classes of both sexes. No other author has painted with such force and truth the most profound passions of the human heart: none has delineated with such feeling and pathos the sentiment of love. The reason is obvious; she described what she had herself felt. In such representation there would probably be nothing in the hands of an ordinary writer but frivolous, or possibly pernicious details; but by Madame de Stael it is touched on so gently, so strongly intermingled with sentiment, and traced so naturally to its ultimate and disastrous effects, that the picture becomes not merely characteristic of manners, but purifying in its tendency.

The *Dix Années d'Exil*, though abounding with fewer splendid and enchanting passages, is written in a different strain, and devoted more to political objects than the Italian novel. It exhibits the Imperial Government of Napoleon in the high and palmy days of his greatness; when all the Continent had bowed the neck to his power, and, from the rock of Gibraltar to the Frozen Ocean, not a voice dared to be lifted against his commands. It shows the internal tyranny

and vexations of this formidable power ; its despicable jealousies and contemptible vanity ; its odious restrictions and tyrannising tendency. We see the censorship chaining the human mind to the night of the tenth in the opening of the nineteenth century ; the commands of the police fettering every effort of independent thought and free discussion ; forty millions of men slavishly following the car of a victor, who, in exchange for all the advantages of freedom, hoped but never obtained from the Revolution, dazzled them with the glitter only of gilded chains. In her subsequent migrations through the Tyrol, Poland, Russia, and Sweden, to avoid his persecution during the years which preceded the Russian war, we have the noblest picture of the elevated feelings which, during this period of general oppression, were rising up in the nations which yet preserved a shadow of independence, as well as of the heroic stand made by Alexander and his brave subjects against the memorable invasion which ultimately proved their assailant's ruin. These are animating themes ; and though not in general inclined to dwell on description, or enrich her work with picturesque narrative, the scenery of the North had wakened profound emotions in her heart, which appear in many touches and reflections of no ordinary sublimity.

Chateaubriand addresses himself much more habitually and systematically to the eye. He paints what he has seen, whether in nature, society, manners, or art, with the graphic skill of a consummate draughtsman ; and produces the emotion he is desirous of awakening, not by direct words calculated to arouse it, but by enabling the imagination to depict to itself the objects which in nature, by their felicitous combination, produced the impression. Madame de Stael does not paint the features of the scene, but in a few words she portrays the emotion which she experienced on beholding it, and contrives by these few words to awaken it in her readers ; Chateaubriand enumerates with a painter's power all the features of the scene, and by the vividness of description succeeds not merely in painting it on the retina of the mind, but in awakening there the precise emotion which he himself felt on beholding it. The one speaks to the heart through the eye, the other to the eye through the heart. As we travel with the illustrious pilgrim of the

Revolution, we see rising before us in successive clearness the lonely temples, and glittering valleys, and storied capes of Greece; the desert plains and rocky ridges and sepulchral hollows of Judea; the solitary palms and stately monuments of Egypt; the isolated remains of Carthage, the deep solitudes of America, the sounding cataracts, and still lakes, and boundless forests of the New World. Not less vivid is his description of human scenes and actions, of which, during his eventful career, he has seen such an extraordinary variety: the Janissary, the Tartar, the Turk; the Bedouins of the desert places, the Numidians of the torrid zone; the cruel Revolutionists of France; the independent savages of America; the ardent mind of Napoleon, the dauntless intrepidity of Pitt. Nothing can exceed the variety and brilliancy of the pictures which he leaves engraven on the imagination of his reader; but he has neither touched the heart nor convinced the judgment like the profound hand of his female rival.

To illustrate these observations, we have selected a passage from Chateaubriand's *Génie du Christianisme*, and placed beside it two of the most inspired of Madame de Stael's passages on Roman scenery. We shall subjoin two of the most admirable descriptions by Sir Walter Scott, that the reader may at once have presented to his view the masterpieces, in the descriptive line, of the three greatest authors of the age. All the passages are translated by ourselves; we have neither translations at hand, nor inclination to mar so much eloquence by the slovenly dress in which it usually appears in an English version.

"One evening, when it was a profound calm, we were sailing through those lovely seas which bathe the coast of Virginia,—all the sails were furled—I was occupied below when I heard the bell which called the mariners upon deck to prayers—I hastened to join my orisons to those of the rest of the crew. The officers were on the forecastle, with the passengers; the priest, with his prayer-book in his hand, stood a little in advance; the sailors were scattered here and there on the deck; we were all above, with our faces turned towards the prow of the vessel, which looked to the west.

"The globe of the sun, ready to plunge into the waves, appeared between the ropes of the vessel in the midst of boundless space. You would have imagined, from the balancing of the poop, that the glorious luminary changed at every instant its horizon. A few light clouds were scattered without order in the east, where the moon was slowly ascending; all the rest of the sky was unclouded. Towards the north, forming a glorious triangle with the star of day and that of night, a glittering cloud arose from the sea,

resplendent with the colours of the prism, like a crystal pile supporting the vault of heaven.

"He is much to be pitied who could have witnessed this scene, without feeling the beauty of God. Tears involuntarily flowed from my eyes, when my companions, taking off their hats, began to sing, in their hoarse strains, the simple hymn of Our Lady of Succour. How touching was that prayer of men, who, on a fragile plank, in the midst of the ocean, contemplated the sun setting in the midst of the waves! How that simple invocation of the mariners to the Mother of Woes went to the heart! The consciousness of our littleness in the sight of Infinity—our chants prolonged afar over the waves—night approaching with its sable wings—a whole crew of a vessel filled with admiration and a holy fear—God bending over the abyss, with one hand retaining the sun at the gates of the west, with the other raising the moon in the east, and yet lending an attentive ear to the voice of prayer ascending from a speck in the immensity—all combined to form an assemblage which cannot be described, and of which the human heart could hardly bear the weight.

"The scene at land was not less ravishing. One evening I had lost my way in a forest, at a short distance from the Falls of Niagara. Soon the day expired around me, and I tasted, in all its solitude, the lovely spectacle of a night in the deserts of the New World.

"An hour after sunset the moon showed itself above the branches, on the opposite side of the horizon. An embalmed breeze, which the Queen of Night seemed to bring with her from the East, preceded her with its freshening gales. The solitary star ascended by degrees in the heavens; sometimes she followed peaceably her azure course, sometimes she reposed on the groups of clouds, which resembled the summits of lofty mountains covered with snow. These clouds, opening and closing their sails, now spread themselves out in transparent zones of white satin, now dispersed into light bubbles of foam, or formed in the heavens bars of white so dazzling and sweet, that you could almost believe you felt their snowy surface.

"The scene on the earth was of equal beauty; the declining day, and the light of the moon, descended into the intervals of the trees, and spread a faint gleam even in the profoundest part of the darkness. The river which flowed at my feet alternately lost itself in the woods, and reappeared brilliant with the constellations of night which reposed on its bosom. In a savanna on the other side of the river, the moonbeams slept motionless on the verdant turf. A few birches, agitated by the breeze, and dispersed here and there, formed isles of floating shadow on that motionless sea of light. All would have been in profound repose, but for the fall of a few leaves, the breath of a transient breeze, and the moaning of the owl; while, at intervals in the distance, the deep roar of Niagara was heard, which, prolonged from desert to desert in the calm of the night, expired at length in the endless solitude of the forest.

"The grandeur, the surpassing melancholy of that scene, can be expressed by no human tongue—the finest nights of Europe can give no conception of it. In vain, amidst our cultivated fields, does the imagination seek to expand—it meets on all sides the habitations of men; but in those savage regions the soul loves to shroud itself in the ocean of forests, to hang over the gulf of cataracts, to meditate on the shores of lakes and rivers, and feel itself alone as it were with God.

> 'Præsentiorem conspicimus Deum
> Fera per juga, clivosque præruptos,
> Sonantes inter aquas nemorumque noctem.'"

We doubt if any passages ever were written of more

thrilling descriptive eloquence than this; hereafter we shall contrast them with some of the finest of Lamartine, which have equalled but not exceeded them. But now mark the different style with which Madame de Stael treats the heart-stirring monuments of Roman greatness.

"At this moment St Peter arose to their view; the greatest edifice which man has ever raised, for the Pyramids themselves are of less considerable elevation. 'I would perhaps have done better,' said Corinne, 'to have taken you to the most beautiful of our edifices last; but that is not my system. I am convinced that, to render one alive to the charm of the fine arts, we should commence with those objects which awaken a lively and profound admiration. When once that sentiment has been experienced, a new sphere of ideas is awakened, which renders us susceptible of the impression produced by beauties of an inferior order; they revive, though in a lesser degree, the first impression which has been received. All these gradations in producing emotion are contrary to my opinion; you do not arrive at the sublime by successive steps; infinite degrees separate it from the beautiful.'

"Oswald experienced an extraordinary emotion on arriving in front of the façade of St Peter's. It was the first occasion on which a work of human hands produced on him the effects of one of the marvels of nature. It is the only effort of human industry which has the grandeur which characterises the immediate works of the Creator. Corinne rejoiced in the astonishment of Oswald. 'I have chosen,' said she, 'a day when the sun was shining in all its brilliance to behold this monument. I reserve for you a more secret, religious enjoyment, to contemplate it by the light of the moon; but at this moment it was necessary to obtain your presence at the most brilliant of our fêtes, the genius of man decorated by the magnificence of nature.'

"The Place of St Peter is surrounded by columns, which appear light at a distance, but massy when seen near. The earth, which rises gently to the gate of the church, adds to the effect it produces. An obelisk of eighty feet in height, which appears as nothing in presence of the cupola of St Peter's, is in the middle of the Place. The form of obelisks has something in it which is singularly pleasing to the imagination; their summit loses itself in the clouds, and seems even to elevate to the heavens a great thought of man. That monument, which was brought from Egypt to adorn the baths of Caracalla, and which Sextus V. subsequently transported to the foot of the Temple of St Peter; that contemporary of so many ages, which have sought in vain to decay its solid frame, inspires respect; man feels himself so fleeting, that he always experiences emotion in presence of that which has passed unchanged through many ages. At a little distance, on each side of the obelisk, are two fountains, the waters of which perpetually are projected up, and fall down in cascades through the air. That murmur of waters, which is usually heard only in the field, produces in such a situation a new sensation; but one in harmony with that which arises from the aspect of so majestic a temple.

"Painting or sculpture, imitating in general the human figure, or some object in external nature, awakens in our minds distinct and positive ideas; but a beautiful monument of architecture has not any determinate expression, and the spectator is seized, on contemplating it, with that reverie, without any definite object, which leads the thoughts so far off. The sound of the waters adds to these vague and profound impressions; it is uniform, as the edifice is regular.

'Eternal movement and eternal repose'

are thus brought to combine with each other. It is here, in an especial

manner, that Time is without power: it never dries up those sparkling streams; it never shakes those immovable pillars. The waters, which spring up in fan-like luxuriance from these fountains, are so light and so vapoury, that, in a fine day, the rays of the sun produce little rainbows of the most beautiful colour.

"'Stop a moment here,' said Corinne to Lord Nelvil, as he stood under the portico of the church; 'pause before drawing aside the curtain which covers the entrance of the Temple. Does not your heart beat at the threshold of that sanctuary? Do you not feel, on entering it, the emotion consequent on a solemn event?' At these words Corinne herself drew aside the curtain, and held it so as to let Lord Nelvil enter. Her attitude *was so beautiful in doing so, that for a moment it withdrew the eyes of her lover even from the majestic interior of the Temple.* But as he advanced, its greatness burst upon his mind, and the impression which he received under its lofty arches was so profound, that the sentiment of love was for a time effaced. He walked slowly beside Corinne; both were silent. Everything enjoined contemplation; the slightest sound resounded so far, that no word appeared worthy of being repeated in those eternal mansions. Prayer alone, the voice of misfortune was heard at intervals in their vast vaults. And when, under those stupendous domes, you hear from afar the voice of an old man, whose trembling steps totter along those beautiful marbles, watered with so many tears, you feel that man is rendered more dignified by that very infirmity of his nature which exposes his divine spirit to so many kinds of suffering, and that Christianity, the worship of grief, contains the true secret of man's sojourn upon earth.

"Corinne interrupted the reverie of Oswald, and said to him, 'You have seen the Gothic churches of England and Germany, and must have observed that they are distinguished by a much more sombre character than this cathedral. There is something mystical in the Catholicism of these Northern people; ours speaks to the imagination by exterior objects. Michael Angelo said, on beholding the cupola of the Pantheon, 'I will place it in the air;' and, in truth, St Peter's is a temple raised on the basement of a church. There is a certain alliance of the ancient worship with Christianity in the effect which the interior of that church produces. I often go to walk here alone, in order to restore to my mind the tranquillity it may have lost. The sight of such a monument is like a continual and fixed music, awaiting you to pour its balm into your mind, whenever you approach it; and certainly, among the many titles of this nation to glory, we must number the patience, courage, and disinterestedness of the chiefs of the Church, who consecrated, during a hundred and fifty years, such vast treasures and boundless labour to the prosecution of a work, of which none of them could hope to enjoy the fruits.'"—*Corinne*, vol. i. c. 3.

In this magnificent passage, the words underlined are an obvious blemish. The idea of Oswald turning aside at the entrance of St Peter's from the gaze of the matchless interior of the Temple, a spectacle unique in the world, to feast his eye by admiration of his *inamorata,* however natural in a lover, is more than ordinary readers, in the frigid latitudes of the north, can altogether understand. But Madame de Stael was a woman, and a Frenchwoman; and apparently she could not resist the opportunity of signalising the triumph of her sex, by portraying the

superiority of female beauty to the grandest and most imposing object that the hands of man have ever reared. Abstracting from this feminine weakness, the passage is one of almost uniform beauty, and well illustrates the peculiar descriptive style of the author; not painting objects, but touching the chords which cause emotions to vibrate. She has unconsciously delineated her own style, as compared with that of Chateaubriand, in describing the different characters of the cathedrals of the North and South.—"There is something mystical in the Catholicism of the Northern people; ours speaks to the imagination by exterior objects."

As another specimen of Madame de Stael's descriptive powers, take her picture of the Appian Way, with its long lines of tombs on either side, on the southern quarter of Rome.

"She conducted Lord Nelvil beyond the gates of the city, on the ancient traces of the Appian Way. These traces are marked in the middle of the Campagna of Rome by tombs, on the right and left of which the ruins extend as far as the eye can reach for several miles beyond the walls. Cicero says that, on leaving the gate, the first tombs you meet are those of Metellus, the Scipios, and Servilius. The tomb of the Scipios has been discovered in the very place which he describes, and transported to the Vatican. Yet it was, in some sort, a sacrilege to displace these illustrious ashes; imagination is more nearly allied than is generally imagined to morality; we must beware of shocking it. Some of these tombs are so large, that the houses of peasants have been worked out in them, for the Romans consecrated a large space to the last remains of their friends and their relatives. They were strangers to that arid principle of utility which fertilises a few corners of earth the more by devastating the vast domain of sentiment and thought.

"You see at a little distance from the Appian Way a temple raised by the Republic to Honour and Virtue; another to the God which compelled Hannibal to remeasure his steps; the Temple of Egeria, where Numa went to consult his tutelar deity, is at a little distance on the left hand. Around these tombs the traces of virtue alone are to be found. No monument of the long ages of crime which disgraced the empire are to be found beside the places where these illustrious dead repose; they rest amongst the relics of the Republic.

"The aspect of the Campagna around Rome has something in it singularly remarkable. Doubtless it is a desert; there are neither trees nor habitations; but the earth is covered with a profusion of natural flowers, which the energy of vegetation renews incessantly. These creeping plants insinuate themselves among the tombs, decorate the ruins, and seem placed there solely to do honour to the dead. You would suppose that nature was too proud there to suffer the labours of man, since Cincinnatus no longer holds the plough which furrows its bosom; it produces flowers in wild profusion, which are of no sort of use to the existing generation. These vast uncultivated plains will doubtless have few attractions for the agriculturist, administrators, and all those who speculate on the earth, with a view to extract from it the riches it is capable of affording; but the thoughtful

minds, whom death occupies as much as life, are singularly attracted by the aspect of that Campagna, where the present times have left no trace; that earth which cherishes only the dead, and covers them in its love with useless flowers—plants which creep along the surface, and never acquire sufficient strength to separate themselves from the ashes, which they have the appearance of caressing."—*Corinne*, book v. c. 1.

How many travellers have traversed the Appian Way, but how few have felt the deep impressions which these words are fitted to produce!

"The churches of modern Rome," continues the same author, "are decorated with the magnificence of antiquity, but there is something sombre and striking in the intermingling of these beautiful marbles with the ornaments stripped from the Pagan temples. The columns of porphyry and granite were so numerous at Rome, that they ceased to have any value. At St John Lateran, that church so famous from the councils of which it was the theatre, there were such a quantity of marble columns that many of them were covered with plaster to be converted into pilasters—so completely had the multitude of riches rendered them indifferent. Some of these columns came from the tomb of Adrian, and bear yet upon their capitals the mark of the geese which saved the Roman people. These columns support the ornaments of Gothic churches, and some rich sculptures in the arabesque order. The urn of Agrippa has received the ashes of a pope, for the dead themselves have yielded their place to other dead, and the tombs have changed tenants nearly as often as the mansions of the living.

"Near St John Lateran is the holy stair, transported from Jerusalem. No one is permitted to ascend it but on his knees. In like manner Cæsar and Claudius ascended on their knees the stair which led to the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus. Beside St John Lateran is the Baptistery, where Constantine was baptised—in the middle of the Place before the church is an obelisk, perhaps the most ancient monument which exists in the world—an obelisk contemporary with the war of Troy—an obelisk which the barbarian Cambyses respected so much as to stop for its beauty the conflagration of a city—an obelisk for which a king put in pledge the life of his only son. The Romans, in a surprising manner, got it conveyed from the depths of Egypt to Italy—they turned aside the course of the Nile to bring its waters so as to convey it to the sea. Even then that obelisk was covered with hieroglyphics whose secrets have been kept for so many ages, and which still withstand the researches of our most learned scholars. Possibly the Indians, the Egyptians, the antiquity of antiquity, might be revealed to us in these mysterious signs. The wonderful charm of Rome consists, not merely in the beauty of its monuments, but in the interest which they all awaken, and that species of charm increases daily with every fresh study."—*Ibid.* c. 3.

We add only a feeble prosaic translation of the splendid *improvisatore* effusion of Corinne on the Cape of Mesinum, surrounded by the marvels of the shore of Baiæ and the Phlegrian fields.

"Poetry, nature, history, here rival each other in grandeur—here you can embrace in a single glance all the revolutions of time and all its prodigies.

"I see the Lake of Avernus, the extinguished crater of a volcano, whose waters formerly inspired so much terror—Acheron, Phlegethon, which a subterraneous flame caused to boil, are the rivers of the infernals visited by Æneas.

"Fire, that devouring element which created the world, and is destined to consume it, was formerly an object of the greater terror that its laws were unknown. Nature, in the olden times, revealed its secrets to poetry alone.

"The City of Cumæ, the Cave of the Sibyl, the Temple of Apollo, were placed on that height. There grew the wood whence was gathered the golden branch. The country of Æneas is around you, and the fictions consecrated by genius have become recollections of which we still seek the traces.

"A Triton plunged into these waves the presumptuous Trojan who dared to defy the divinities of the deep by his songs—these water-worn and sonorous rocks have still the character which Virgil gave them. Imagination was faithful even in the midst of its omnipotence. The genius of man is creative when he feels Nature—imitative when he fancies he is creating.

"In the midst of these terrible masses, gray witnesses of the creation, we see a new mountain which the volcano has produced. Here the earth is stormy as the ocean, and does not, like it, re-enter peaceably into its limits. The heavy element, elevated by subterraneous fire, fills up valleys, 'rains mountains,' and its petrified waves attest the tempests which once tore its entrails.

"If you strike on this hill, the subterraneous vault resounds—you would say that the inhabited earth is nothing but a crust ready to open and swallow us up. The Campagna of Naples is the image of human passion—sulphurous, but fruitful; its dangers and its pleasures appear to grow out of those glowing volcanoes which give to the air so many charms, and cause the thunder to roll beneath our feet.

"Pliny boasted that his country was the most beautiful in existence—he studied nature to be able to appreciate its charms. Seeking the inspiration of science as a warrior does conquest, he set forth from this promontory to observe Vesuvius athwart the flames, and those flames consumed him.

"Cicero lost his life near the promontory of Gaeta, which is seen in the distance. The Triumvirs, regardless of posterity, bereaved it of the thoughts which that great man had conceived—it was on us that his murder was committed.

"Cicero sank beneath the poniards of tyrants—Scipio, more unfortunate, was banished by his fellow-citizens while still in the enjoyment of freedom. He terminated his days near that shore, and the ruins of his tomb are still called the 'Tower of our Country.' What a touching allusion to the last thought of that great spirit!

"Marius fled into those marshes not far from the last home of Scipio. Thus in all ages the people have persecuted the really great; but they are avenged by their apotheosis, and the Roman, who conceived their power extended even unto heaven, placed Romulus, Numa, and Cæsar in the firmament—new stars which confound in our eyes the rays of glory and the celestial radiance.

"Oh, Memory! noble power! thy empire is in these scenes! From age to age, strange destiny! man is incessantly bewailing what he has lost! These remote ages are the depositaries in their turn of a greatness which is no more; and while the pride of thought, glorying in its progress, darts into futurity, our soul seems still to regret an ancient country to which the past in some degree brings it back."—Book xii. c. 4.

Enough has now been quoted to give the unlettered reader a conception of the descriptive character of these two great Continental writers—to recall to the learned one some of the most delightful moments of his life. To complete the

parallel, we shall now present a few of the finest passages of a similar character from Sir Walter Scott, that our readers may be able to appreciate at a single sitting the varied excellences of the greatest masters of poetic prose who have appeared in modern times.

The first is the well-known opening scene of *Ivanhoe*.

"The sun was setting upon one of the rich grassy glades of that forest, which we have mentioned in the beginning of the chapter. Hundreds of broad-headed, short-stemmed, wide-branched oaks, which had witnessed perhaps the stately march of the Roman soldiery, flung their gnarled arms over a thick carpet of the most delicious greensward; in some places they were intermingled with beeches, hollies, and copsewood of various descriptions, so closely as totally to intercept the level beams of the sinking sun; in others they receded from each other, forming those long sweeping vistas in the intricacy of which the eye delights to lose itself, while imagination considers them as the paths to yet wilder scenes of sylvan solitude. Here the red rays of the sun shot a broken and discoloured light, that partially hung upon the shattered boughs and mossy trunks of the trees, and there they illuminated in brilliant patches the portions of turf to which they made their way. A considerable open space, in the midst of this glade, seemed formerly to have been dedicated to the rites of Druidical superstition; for, on the summit of a hillock, so regular as to seem artificial, there still remained part of a circle of rough unhewn stones, of large dimensions. Seven stood upright; the rest had been dislodged from their places, probably by the zeal of some convert to Christianity, and lay, some prostrate near their former site, and others on the side of the hill. One large stone only had found its way to the bottom, and in stopping the course of a small brook, which glided smoothly round the foot of the eminence, gave, by its opposition, a feeble voice of murmur to the placid and elsewhere silent streamlet."

The next is the equally celebrated description of the churchyard in the introductory chapter of *Old Mortality*.

"Farther up the narrow valley, and in a recess which seems scooped out of the side of the steep heathy bank, there is a deserted burial-ground which the little cowards are fearful of approaching in the twilight. To me, however, the place has an inexpressible charm. It has been long the favourite termination of my walks, and, if my kind patron forgets not his promise, will (and probably at no very distant day) be my final resting-place after my mortal pilgrimage.

"It is a spot which possesses all the solemnity of feeling attached to a burial-ground, without exciting those of a more unpleasing description. Having been very little used for many years, the few hillocks which rise above the level plain are covered with the same short velvet turf. The monuments, of which there are not above seven or eight, are half sunk in the ground and overgrown with moss. No newly-erected tomb disturbs the sober serenity of our reflections by reminding us of recent calamity, and no rank springing grass forces upon our imagination the recollection, that it owes its dark luxuriance to the foul and festering remnants of mortality which ferment beneath. The daisy which sprinkles the sod, and the hare-bell which hangs over it, derive their pure nourishment from the dew of heaven, and their growth impresses us with no degrading or disgusting recollections. Death has indeed been here, and its traces are before us;

but they are softened and deprived of their horror by our distance from the period when they have been first impressed. Those who sleep beneath are only connected with us by the reflection, that they have once been what we now are, and that, as their relics are now identified with their mother earth, ours shall, at some future period, undergo the same transformation.

The third is a passage equally well-known, and hardly less beautiful, from the *Antiquary*.

"The sun was now resting in his huge disc upon the edge of the level ocean, and gilded the accumulation of towering clouds through which he had travelled the livelong day, and which now assembled on all sides, like misfortunes and disasters around a sinking empire and falling monarch. Still, however, his dying splendour gave a sombre magnificence to the massive congregation of vapours, forming out of their unsubstantial gloom the show of pyramids and towers, some touched with gold, some with purple, some with a hue of deep and dark red. The distant sea, stretched beneath this varied and gorgeous canopy, lay almost portentously still, reflecting back the dazzling and level beams of the descending luminary, and the splendid colouring of the clouds amidst which he was setting. Nearer to the beach, the tide rippled onward in waves of sparkling silver, that imperceptibly, yet rapidly, gained upon the sand.

"With a mind employed in admiration of the romantic scene, or perhaps on some more agitating topic, Miss Warder advanced in silence by her father's side, whose recently offended dignity did not stoop to open any conversation. Following the windings of the beach, they passed one projecting point or headland of rock after another, and now found themselves under a huge and continued extent of the precipices by which that iron-bound coast is in most places defended. Long projecting reefs of rock, extending under water, and only evincing their existence by here and there a peak entirely bare, or by the breakers which foamed over those that were partially covered, rendered Knockwinnock Bay dreaded by pilots and shipmasters. The crags which rose between the beach and the mainland, to the height of two or three hundred feet, afforded in their crevices shelter for unnumbered sea-fowl, in situations seemingly secured by their dizzy height from the rapacity of man. Many of these wild tribes, with the instinct which sends them to seek the land before a storm arises, were now winging towards their nests with the shrill and dissonant clang which announces disquietude and fear. The disc of the sun became almost totally obscured ere he had altogether sunk below the horizon, and an early and lurid shade of darkness blotted the serene twilight of a summer evening. The wind began next to arise; but its wild and moaning sound was heard for some time, and its effects became visible on the bosom of the sea, before the gale was felt on shore. The mass of waters, now dark and threatening, began to lift itself in larger ridges, and sink in deeper furrows, forming waves that rose high in foam upon the breakers, or burst upon the beach with a sound resembling distant thunder."

Few objects are less beautiful than a bare sheet of water in heathy hills, but see what it becomes under the inspiration of genius.

"It was a mild summer day. The beams of the sun, as is not uncommon in Zetland, were moderated and shaded by a silvery haze, which filled the atmosphere, and, destroying the strong contrast of light and shade, gave even to noon the sober livery of the evening twilight. The little lake, not three-quarters of a mile in circuit, lay in profound quiet; its surface

undimpled, save when one of the numerous water-fowl, which glided on its surface, dived for an instant under it. The depth of the water gave the whole that cerulean tint of bluish green, which occasioned its being called the Green Loch; and at present, it formed so perfect a mirror to the bleak hills by which it was surrounded, and which lay reflected on its bosom, that it was difficult to distinguish the water from the land; nay, in the shadowy uncertainty occasioned by the thin haze, a stranger could scarce have been sensible that a sheet of water lay before him. A scene of more complete solitude, having all its peculiarities heightened by the extreme serenity of the weather, the quiet gray composed tone of the atmosphere, and the perfect silence of the elements, could hardly be imagined. The very aquatic birds, who frequented the spot in great numbers, forbore their usual flight and screams, and floated in profound tranquillity upon the silent water."

It is hard to say to which of these mighty masters of description the palm should be awarded. Scott is more simple in his language, more graphic in his details, more thoroughly imbued with the character of the place he is desirous of portraying: Chateaubriand is more resplendent in the images which he selects, more fastidious in the features he draws, more gorgeous from the magnificence with which he is surrounded: Madame de Stael, inferior to both in the powers of delineating nature, is superior to either in rousing the varied emotions dependent on historical recollections or melancholy impressions. It is remarkable that, though she is a southern writer, and has thrown into Corinne all her own rapture at the sun and the recollections of Italy, yet it is with a northern eye that she views the scenes it presents—it is not with the living, but the mighty dead, that she holds communion—the chords she loves to strike are those melancholy ones which vibrate more strongly in a northern than a southern heart. Chateaubriand is imbued more largely with the genuine spirit of the south: albeit a Frank by origin, he is filled with the spirit of Oriental poetry. His soul is steeped in the cloudless skies, and desultory life, and boundless recollections of the East. Scott has no decided locality. He has struck his roots into the human heart—he has described Nature with a master's hand, under whatever aspects she is to be seen: but his associations are of Gothic origin; his spirit is of chivalrous descent; the nature which he has in general drawn is the sweet gleam of sunshine in a northern climate.

M. DE TOCQUEVILLE

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M. de Tocqueville is one of the greatest of the political philosophers of the present day. Alone of all his contemporaries, his best works will bear a comparison with those of Machiavelli and Bacon. Less caustic and condensed than Tacitus, less imaginative and eloquent than Burke, he possesses the calm judgment, the discriminating eye, and the just reflection, which have immortalised the Florentine statesman and the English philosopher. Born and bred in the midst of the vehement strife of parties in his own country, placed midway, as it were, between the ruins of feudal and the reconstruction of modern society in France, he has surveyed the contest with an impartial gaze. He has brought to the examination of republican institutions, in the United States, the eye of calm reason and the powers of philosophic reflection. The war-cries, the illusions, the associations of neither party have been able to disturb his steady mind. Though descended of an ancient family, he is not bigoted in favour of the old régime ; though belonging to a profession where strenuous efforts can alone insure success, he is not blind to the dangers of the new order of things. The feudal ages, with their dignified manners, glorious episodes, and heart-stirring recollections, are not lost upon him, but they have not closed his eyes to the numerous evils which they brought in their train. Modern times, with their general activity, vast achievements, and boundless anticipations, have produced their full effect on his thoughtful mind ; but they have not rendered him insensible to the perils with which they are fraught. He is a Burke without his imagination—a Machiavelli without his crimes.

M. de Tocqueville, it is well known, is a firm believer in the progress of society to a general system of equality and popular government. He thinks that, for better or for worse, this tendency is inevitable ; that all efforts to resist it are vain, and that true wisdom consists in accommodating ourselves to the new order of things, and making the transition with as little confusion and individual distress as may be. America he considers as the type of what Europe is to become ; though he has grievous misgivings as to the final result of such a prostration of the great interests of society as has there taken place, and is too well-read a scholar not to know that it was in the institutions of the Byzantine empire that a similar levelling resulted in ancient times. But being thus a devout believer, if not in the doctrine of perfectibility, at least in that of ceaseless progress towards democracy, his opinions are of the highest value when he portrays the perils with which the new order of things is attended. Alone of all the moderns, he has fixed the public attention upon the real danger of purely republican institutions ; he first has discerned, in their working in America, where it is that the lasting peril is to be apprehended. Passing by the bloodshed, suffering, and confiscations with which the transition from aristocratic ascendency to democratic power is necessarily attended, he has examined with a scrutinising eye the practical working of the latter system in the United States, where it had been long established and was in pacific undisputed sovereignty. He has demonstrated that, in such circumstances, it is not the *weakness* but the *strength* of the ruling power in the state which is the great danger ; and that the many-headed despot, acting by means of a subservient press and servile juries, speedily becomes as formidable to real freedom as ever Eastern sultaun with his despotic power and armed guards has proved.

The works of this very eminent writer, however, are by no means of equal merit. The last two volumes of his *Democratie en Amérique* are much inferior to the first. In the latter, he sketched out with a master hand, when fresh from the object of his study, the practical working of democratic institutions, when entirely free from all the impediments which, it was alleged, concealed or thwarted their operation in the Old World. He delineated the results of

the republican principle in a new state, without a hereditary nobility, established church, or national debt; unfettered by primogeniture, pauperism, or previous misgovernment; surrounded by boundless lands of exceeding fertility, with all the powers of European knowledge to bring them into cultivation, and all the energy of the Anglo-Saxon race to carry out the mission of Japhet—to replenish the earth and subdue it. The world had never seen, probably the world will never again see, the democratic principle launched into activity under such favourable circumstances, and when its practical effect, for good or for evil, could with so much accuracy and certainty be discerned. The study and delineation of such an experiment, in such circumstances, and on such a scale, by a competent observer, must have been an object of the highest interest at any time; but what must it be when that observer is a man of the capacity and judgment of M. de Tocqueville?

The latter volumes of the same work, however, have dipped into more doubtful matters, and have brought forward more questionable opinions. The inquisitive mind, philosophic turn, and deep reflection of the author, indeed, are everywhere conspicuous; but his opinions do not equally, as in the first two volumes, bear the signet-mark of truth stamped upon them. They are more speculative and fanciful; founded rather on contemplation of future, than observation of present effects. When De Tocqueville painted the unrestrained working of democracy on political thought and parties, as he saw it around him in the course of his residence in America, he drew a picture which all, in circumstances at all similar, must at once have recognised as trustworthy, because it was only an extension of what they had witnessed in their own vicinity. But when he extended these effects so far as he has done in his later volumes, to manners, opinions, habits, and the intercourse of the sexes, the attempt seemed overstrained. The theory, beyond all question just to a certain point, was pushed too far. M. de Tocqueville's great reputation, accordingly, has been somewhat impaired by the publication of his last two volumes on democracy in America; and it is to the first two that the philosophic student most frequently recurs for light on the practical working of the popular system.

Perhaps, too, there is another, and a still more cogent reason, why the reputation of this philosopher has not continued so general as it at first was. This is his *impartiality*. Both the great parties which divide the world turned to his work on its first appearance with avidity, in the hope of discovering something favourable to their respective views. Neither were disappointed. Both found numerous facts and observations of the very highest importance, and having a material bearing on the points at issue between them. Enchanted with the discovery, each raised an *Io Pæan;* and, in the midst of a chorus of praise from Liberals and Conservatives, M. de Tocqueville took his place as the first political philosopher of the age. But in process of time, both discovered something in his opinions which they would rather had been omitted. The popular party were displeased at seeing it proved that the great and virtuous middle classes of society could establish a despotism as complete, and more irresistible, than any sultaun of Asia; the aristocratic, at finding the opinion of the author not disguised that the tendency to democracy was irresistible, and that, for good or for evil, it had irrevocably set in upon human affairs. But present celebrity is seldom a test of future fame; in matters of thought and reflection, scarcely ever so. What makes a didactic author popular at the moment is the coincidence of his opinions with those of his readers, in the main, and the tracing them out to some consequences as yet new to them. What gives him fame with futurity is, his having boldly resisted general delusions, and violently, and to the great vexation of his contemporaries, first demonstrated the erroneous nature of many of their opinions, which subsequent experience has shown to be false. "The present and the future," says Sir Joshua Reynolds, "are rivals; he who pays court to the one, must lay his account with being discountenanced by the other." We augur the more favourably for M. de Tocqueville's lasting fame, from his being no longer quoted by party writers on either side of the questions which divide society.

That human affairs are now undergoing a great and durable alteration; that we are in a *transition state* of society, when new settlements are taking place, and the old levels are heaved up or displaced by expansive force from beneath,

is universally admitted; but the world is as yet in the dark as to the ultimate results, whether for good or evil, of these vast and organic changes. While the popular advocates look upon them as the commencement of a new era in social existence—as the opening of a period of knowledge, freedom, and general happiness, in which the human race, freed from the fetters of feudal tyranny, is to arrive at an unprecedented state of social felicity—the Conservative party everywhere regard them as fraught with the worst possible effects to all classes in society, and to none more immediately than to those by whom they are so blindly urged forward, as conducing to the destruction of all the bulwarks both of property and freedom. While these opposite and irreconcilable opinions are honestly and firmly maintained by millions on either side of this great controversy, and victory inclines sometimes to one side and sometimes to another in the course of the contests, civil and military, which it engenders, "Time rolls on his ceaseless course;" the actors and the spectators in the world's debate are alike hurried to the grave, and new generations succeed, who are borne along by the same mighty stream, and inherit from their parents the passions and prejudices inseparable from a question in which such boundless expectations have been excited on the one side, and such vital interests are at stake on the other.

The symptoms of this transition state distinctly appear, not merely in the increase of political power on the part of the lower classes in almost every state of Western Europe, but in the general formation of warm hopes and anticipations on their parts inconsistent with their present condition, and the universal adaptation of science, literature, arts, and manufactures to their wants. Supposing the most decided reaction to take place in public feeling in the British dominions, and the most Conservative Administration to be placed at the helm, still the state has been essentially revolutionised. The great organic change has been made, and cannot be undone. Government is no longer, and never again will be, as long as a mixed constitution lasts, a free agent. It is impelled by the inclinations of the majority of 900,000 electors, in whom supreme power is substantially vested. At one time it may be too revolutionary, at another too monarchical; but in either it can only be the reflecting mirror of

public opinion, and must receive, not communicate, the impulse of general thought. France is irrecoverably gone down the gulf. All the checks either on arbitrary or popular power have been completely destroyed by the insane ambition of its populace; and its capital has been transformed into a vast arena, where two savage wild beasts, equally fatal to mankind—despotic power and democratic ambition—fiercely contend for the mastery, but where the fair form of Freedom is never again destined to appear. Spain and Portugal are torn by the same furious passions: a Vendean struggle is maintained with heroic constancy in the north; a Jacobin revolution is rapidly spreading in the south; and amidst a deadly civil war, and the confiscation of church and funded property, the democratic and despotic principles are rapidly coming into collision, and threaten speedily there, as elsewhere, to extinguish all the securities of real freedom in the shock.

It is not merely, however, in the political world that the symptoms of a vast organic change in Western Europe are to be discerned. Manners and habits evince as clearly the prodigious, and, as we fear, degrading transition which is going on amongst us. We are not blindly attached to the customs of former times, and willingly admit that, in some respects, a change for the better has taken place; but in others how wofully for the worse, and how prodigious, at all events, is the alteration, whether for better or worse, which is in progress! With the feeling of chivalry still giving dignity to the higher ranks, and a sense of loyalty yet elevating the lower; with religion paramount in all the influential classes, and subordination as yet unshaken among the industrious poor, a state of manners ensued, a degree of felicity was attained, a height of national glory was reached, to which the future generations of Europe will look back with the more regret that, once lost, it is altogether irrecoverable. We do not despair of the fortunes of our country, still less of the human race; but we have no hope that those bright and glorious days can ever return. Vigour, indeed, is not awanting; activity—restless, insatiable activity, is in profusion; talent is as yet undecayed; but where are the elevated feelings, the high resolves, the enduring constancy, the religious inspiration, the moral resolution, which gave dignity

and grandeur to the past age? These qualities, doubtless, are still found in many individuals; but we speak of the general tendency of things, not the character of particular men. Even where they do occur, are they not chiefly to be discerned in those of a certain standing in life? and are they not remarked by the rising generation as remnants of the former age, which are fast disappearing, and will soon be totally extinct?

Look at education,—above all, the education of the middle and lower orders,—and say whether a vast and degrading change is not there rapidly taking place? It is there, more than anywhere else, that "coming events cast their shadows before." Elevating or ennobling knowledge, moral and religious instruction, purifying and entrancing compositions are discarded. The arts, the mechanical or manufacturing arts, alone are looked to; nothing is thought of but what can immediately be turned into money. The Church, and all the institutions connected with it, are considered as not destined to any lengthened endurance, and therefore classical learning is scouted and abandoned. The philosopher's stone is alone sought after by the alchemists of modern days; nothing is studied but what will render the human mind prolific of dollars. To purify the heart and humanise the affections; to improve the understanding and dignify the manners; to provide not the means of elevation in life, but the power of bearing elevation with propriety; to confer not the power of subduing others, but the means of conquering one's self; to impress love to God and goodwill towards men, are deemed the useless and antiquated pursuits of the monks of former days. Practical chemistry and sulphuric acid, decrepitating salts and hydraulic engines, algebraic equations and commercial academies, mercantile navigation and double and single book-keeping, have fairly, in the seminaries of the middle ranks, driven Cicero and Virgil off the field. The vast extension of education, the prodigious present activity and energy of the human mind, the incessant efforts of the middle ranks to elevate and improve their worldly situation, afford, we fear, no reasonable grounds for hoping that this degrading change can be arrested; on the contrary, they are the very circumstances which afford a moral certainty that it will continue and increase.

That the energy, expectations, and discontent now generally prevalent among the labouring classes, and appearing in the feverish desire for social amelioration, and the ready reception of any projects, how vain soever, which promise to promote it, will lead to great and important changes in the condition both of government, society, and manners, is too obvious to require any illustration. The intense and feverish attention to worldly objects which these changes at once imply and produce, the undue extension of artificial wants among the labouring poor which they generate, the severe competition to which all classes are in consequence exposed, the minute subdivision of labour which such a high and increasing state of manufacturing skill occasions, the experienced impossibility of rising in any department without a thorough and exclusive attention to its details, are the very circumstances of all others the most fatal to the improvement of the understanding, or the regulation of the heart. Amidst the shock of so many contending interests, the calm pursuits of science, which lead not to wealth, will be abandoned; the institutions which as yet maintain it will be sacrificed to the increasing clamour of democratic jealousy; literature will become a mere stimulant to the passions, or amusement of an hour; religion, separated from its property, will sink into a trade, in which the prejudices and passions of the congregations of each minister will be inflamed instead of being subdued. Every generous or ennobling study will be discarded for the mere pursuits of wealth or animal enjoyment; excitement in all its forms will become the universal object; and in the highest state of manufacturing skill, and in the latest stages of social regeneration, our descendants may sink irrecoverably into the degeneracy of Roman or Italian manners.

The extension and improvement of the mechanical arts —the multiplication of railroads, canals, and harbours—extraordinary rapidity of internal communication—increasing craving for newspapers, and excitement in all its forms; the general spread of comfort, and universal passion of luxury, afford no antidote whatever against the native corruption of the human heart. We may go to Paris from London in three hours, and to Constantinople in twelve ; we may communicate with India, by the telegraph, in a forenoon,

and make an autumnal excursion to the Pyramids or Persepolis in a fortnight, by steam-boats, and yet, amidst all our improvements, be the most degraded and corrupt of the human race. Internal communication was brought to perfection in the Roman empire, but did that revive the spirit of the legions, or avert the arms of the barbarians?—did it restore the age of Virgil and Cicero? Because all the citizens gazed daily on the most sumptuous edifices, and lived amidst a forest of the noblest statues, did that hinder the rapid corruption of manners, the irretrievable degeneracy of character, the total extinction of genius? Did their proud and ignorant contempt of the barbarous nations save either the Greeks or the Romans from subjugation by a ruder and more savage, but a fresher and a nobler race? Were they not prating about the lights of the age, and the unparalleled state of social refinement, when the swords of Alaric and Attila were already drawn? In the midst of all our excursions, have we yet penetrated that deepest of all mysteries, the human heart? with all our improvements, have we eradicated one evil passion or extinguished one guilty propensity in that dark fountain of evil?

Alas! facts, clear undeniable facts, prove the reverse. With the spread of knowledge, and the growth of every species of social improvement, general depravity has gone on increasing with an accelerated pace, both in France and England, and every increase of knowledge seems but an addition to the length of the lever by which vice dissolves the fabric of society.* It is not simple knowledge, it is knowledge detached from religion, that produces this fatal result; and unhappily that is precisely the species of knowledge which is the present object of fervent popular desire. The reason of its corrupting tendency on morals is evident—when so detached it multiplies the desires and passions of the heart without any increase to its regulating principles; it augments the attacking without strengthening the resisting powers, and thence the disorder and license it spreads through society. The invariable charac-

* The curious tables of M. Guerrin prove that in every department of France, without exception, general depravity is just in proportion to the extension of knowledge. "At one throw," says the candid Mr Bulwer, "he has bowled down all our preconceived ideas on this vital subject."—See BULWER'S *France*, vol. i., Appendix.

teristic of a declining and corrupt state of society is a progressive increase in the force of passion, and a progressive decline in the influence of duty; and this tendency, so conspicuous in France, so evidently beginning amongst ourselves, is increased by nothing so much as that spread of education without religion which is the manifest tendency of the present times.

What renders it painfully clear that this corruption has not only begun, but has far advanced amidst a large proportion of our people, is the evident decline in the effect of moral character upon political influence. It used to be the boast, and the deserved boast of England, that talents the most commanding, descent the most noble, achievements the most illustrious, could not secure power without the aid of moral virtue. These times are gone past. Depravity of character, sordidness of disposition, recklessness of conduct, are now no security whatever against political demagogues wielding the very greatest political influence, nay, to their being held up as the object of public admiration, and possibly forced upon the Government of the country. What has the boasted spread of education done to exclude such characters from political weight? Nothing—it is, on the contrary, the very thing which gives them their ascendency. The time has evidently arrived when the commission of political crimes, the stain of guilt, the opprobrium of disgrace, is no objection whatever with a large and influential party to political leaders, provided they possess the qualities likely to insure success in their designs. "It is the fatal effect," says Madame de Stael, "of revolutions to obliterate altogether our ideas of right and wrong, and instead of the eternal distinctions of morality and religion, to apply no other test, in general estimation, to political actions but success." This affords a melancholy presage of what may be expected when the same vicious and degrading principles are still more generally embraced and applied to the ordinary transactions, characters, and business of life. M. de Tocqueville has well explained how this melancholy progress is hastened by the triumph of democracy :—

"If absolute power were re-established amongst the democratic nations of Europe, I am persuaded that it would assume a new form, and appear under features unknown to our forefathers. There was a time in Europe, when the laws and the consent of the people had invested princes with

almost unlimited authority; but they scarcely ever availed themselves of it. I do not speak of the prerogatives of the nobility, of the authority of supreme courts of justice, of corporations and their chartered right, or of provincial privileges, which served to break the blows of the sovereign authority, and to maintain a spirit of resistance in the nation. Independently of these political institutions,—which, however opposed they might be to personal liberty, served to keep alive the love of freedom in the mind of the public, and which may be esteemed to have been useful in this respect—the manners and opinions of the nation confined the royal authority within barriers which were not less powerful, although they were less conspicuous. Religion, the affections of the people, the benevolence of the prince, the sense of honour, family pride, provincial prejudices, custom, and public opinion limited the power of kings, and restrained their authority within an invisible circle. The constitution of nations was despotic at that time, but their manners were free. Princes had the right, but they had neither the means nor the desire, of doing whatever they pleased.

"But what now remains of those barriers which formerly arrested the aggressions of tyranny? Since religion has lost its empire over the souls of men, the most prominent boundary which divided good from evil is overthrown; the very elements of the moral world are indeterminate; the princes and the people of the earth are guided by chance, and none can define the natural limits of despotism and the bounds of license. Long revolutions have for ever destroyed the respect which surrounded the rulers of the State; and since they have been relieved from the burden of public esteem, princes may henceforward surrender themselves without fear to the seductions of arbitrary power.

"When kings find that the hearts of their subjects are turned towards them, they are clement, because they are conscious of their strength; and they are chary of the affections of their people, because the affection of their people is the bulwark of the throne. A mutual interchange of goodwill then takes place between the prince and the people, which resembles the gracious intercourse of domestic society. The subjects may murmur at the sovereign's decree, but they are grieved to displease him; and the sovereign chastises his subjects with the light hand of parental affection.

"But when once the spell of loyalty is broken in the tumult of revolution; when successive monarchs have crossed the throne, so as alternately to display to the people the weakness of their right and the harshness of their power, the sovereign is no longer regarded by any as the Father of the State, and he is feared by all as its master. If he be weak, he is despised; if he be strong, he is detested. He is himself full of animosity and alarm; he finds that he is a stranger in his own country, and he treats his subjects like conquered enemies.

"When the provinces and the towns formed so many different nations in the midst of their common country, each of them had a will of his own, which was opposed to the general spirit of subjection: but now that all the parts of the same empire, after having lost their immunities, their customs, their prejudices, their traditions, and their names, are subjected and accustomed to the same laws, it is not more difficult to oppress them collectively than it was formerly to oppress them singly.

"Whilst the nobles enjoyed their power, and, indeed, long after that power was lost, the honour of aristocracy conferred an extraordinary degree of force upon their personal opposition. They afforded instances of men who, notwithstanding their weakness, still entertained a high opinion of their personal value, and dared to cope single-handed with the efforts of the public authority. But at the present day, when all ranks are more and more confounded, when the individual disappears in the throng, and is easily lost in the midst of a common obscurity, when the honour of monarchy has almost lost its empire without being succeeded by public virtue, and when

nothing can enable man to rise above himself, who shall say at what point the exigencies of power and the servility of weakness will stop?

"As long as family feeling was kept alive, the antagonist of oppression was never alone; he looked about him, and found his clients, his hereditary friends and his kinsfolk. If this support was wanting, he was sustained by his ancestors, and animated by his posterity. But when patrimonial estates are divided, and when a few years suffice to confound the distinctions of a race, where can family feeling be found? What force can there be in the customs of a country which has changed, and is still perpetually changing, its aspect; in which every act of tyranny has a precedent, and every crime an example; in which there is nothing so old that its antiquity can save it from destruction, and nothing so unparalleled that its novelty can prevent it from being done? What resistance can be offered by manners of so pliant a make, that they have already often yielded? What strength can even public opinion have retained, when no twenty persons are connected by a common tie; when not a man, nor a family, nor chartered corporation, nor class, nor free institution, has the power of representing or exerting that opinion; and when every citizen—being equally weak, equally poor, and equally dependent—has only his personal impotence to oppose to the organised force of the Government?

"The annals of France furnish nothing analogous to the condition in which that country might then be thrown. But it may be more aptly assimilated to the times of old, and to those hideous eras of Roman oppression, when the manners of the people were corrupted, their traditions obliterated, their habits destroyed, their opinions shaken, and freedom, expelled from the laws, could find no refuge in the land; when nothing protected the citizens, and the citizens no longer protected themselves; when human nature was the sport of man, and princes wearied out the clemency of Heaven before they exhausted the patience of their subjects. Those who hope to revive the monarchy of Henry IV. or of Louis XIV., appear to me to be afflicted with mental blindness; and when I consider the present condition of several European nations—a condition to which all the others tend—I am led to believe that they will soon be left with no other alternative than democratic liberty, or the tyranny of the Cæsars."—TOCQUEVILLE, ii. 247.

We shall not stop to show how precisely these views of Tocqueville coincide with what we have invariably advanced, or to express the gratification we experience at finding these principles now embraced by the ablest of the French Democratic party, after the most enlightened view of American institutions. We hasten, therefore, to show that these results of the French Revolution, melancholy and depressing as they are, are nothing more than the accomplishment of what, forty-five years ago, Mr Burke prophesied of its ultimate effects.

"The policy of such barbarous victors," says Mr Burke, "who contemn a subdued people, and insult their inhabitants, ever has been to destroy all vestiges of the ancient country in religion, policy, laws, and manners, to confound all territorial limits, produce a general poverty, crush their nobles, princes, and pontiffs, to lay low everything which lifted its head above the level, or which could serve to combine or rally, in their distresses, the disbanded people under the standard of old opinion. They have made France free in the manner in which their ancient friends to the rights of mankind

freed Greece, Macedon, Gaul, and other nations. If their present project of a Republic should fail, all securities to a moderate freedom fail along with it; they have levelled and crushed together all the orders which they found under the monarchy: all the indirect restraints which mitigate despotism are removed, insomuch that if monarchy should ever again obtain an entire ascendency in France, under *this or any other dynasty*, it will probably be, if not voluntarily tempered at setting out by the wise and virtuous counsels of the prince, the most completely arbitrary power that ever appeared on earth."—BURKE, v. 328, 333.

If we examine the history of the world with attention, we shall find that, amidst great occasional variations produced by secondary and inferior causes, two great powers have been at work from the earliest times; and, like the antagonist expansive and compressing force in physical nature, have, by their mutual and counteracting influence, produced the greatest revolutions and settlements in human affairs. These opposing forces are NORTHERN CONQUEST and CIVILISED DEMOCRACY. Their agency appears clear and forcible at the present times, and the spheres of their action are different; but mighty ultimate results are to attend their irresistible operation in the theatres destined by nature for their respective operation.

We, who have invariably and resolutely opposed the advances of democracy, and that equally when it raised its voice aloft on the seat of Government, as when it lurked under the specious guise of free trade or liberality, will not be accused of being blinded in favour of its effects. We claim, therefore, full credit for sincerity, and deem some weight due to our opinion, when we assert that it is the great *moving power* in human affairs—the source of the greatest efforts of human genius—and, *when duly restrained* from running into excess, the grand instrument of human advancement. It is not from ignorance of, or insensibility to, its prodigious effects, that we have proved ourselves so resolute in resisting its undue expansion: it is, on the contrary, from a full appreciation of them, from a thorough knowledge of the vast results, whether for good or evil, which it invariably produces.

It is the nature of the democratic passion to produce an inextinguishable degree of vigour and activity among the middle classes of society—to develop an unknown energy among their widespread ranks—to fill their bosoms with insatiable and often visionary projects of advancement and

amelioration, and inspire them with an ardent desire to raise themselves individually and collectively in the world. Thence the astonishing results—sometimes for good, sometimes for evil—which it produces. Its grand characteristic is *energy*, and energy not rousing the exertions merely of a portion of society, but awakening the dormant strength of millions; not producing merely the chivalrous valour of the highbred cavalier, but drawing forth "the might that slumbers in a peasant's arm." The greatest achievements of genius, the noblest efforts of heroism, that have illustrated the history of the species, have arisen from the efforts of this principle. Thence the fight of Marathon and the glories of Salamis—the genius of Greece and the conquests of Rome—the heroism of Sempach and the devotion of Haarlem—the paintings of Raphael and the poetry of Tasso—the energy which covered with a velvet carpet the slopes of the Alps, and the industry which bridled the stormy seas of the German Ocean—the burning passions which carried the French legions to Cadiz and the Kremlin, and the sustained fortitude which gave to Britain the dominion of the waves. Thence, too, in its wilder and unrestrained excesses, the greatest crimes which have disfigured the dark annals of human wickedness—the massacres of Athens and the banishments of Florence—the carnage of Marius and the proscriptions of the Triumvirate—the violence of Cromwell and the bloodshed of Robespierre.

As the democratic passion is thus a principle of such vital and searching energy, so it is from it, when acting under due regulation and control, that the greatest and most durable advances in social existence have sprung. Why are the shores of the Mediterranean the scene to which the pilgrim, from every quarter of the globe, journeys to visit at once the cradles of civilisation, the birthplace of arts, of arms, of philosophy, of poetry, and the scenes of their highest and most glorious achievements? Because freedom spread along its smiling shores; because the ruins of Athens and Sparta, of Rome and Carthage, of Tyre and Syracuse, lie on its margin; because civilisation, advancing with the white sails which glittered on its blue expanse, pierced, as if impelled by central heat, through the dark and barbarous regions of the Celtic race who peopled its shores.

What gave Rome the empire of the world, and brought the venerable ensigns bearing the words "Senatu populoque Romano" to the wall of Antoninus and the foot of Mount Atlas, the waters of the Euphrates and the Atlantic Ocean? Democratic vigour. Democratic vigour, be it observed, *duly coerced by Patrician power;* the insatiable ambition of successive consuls, guided by the wisdom of the senate; the unconquerable and inexhaustible bands which for centuries issued from the Roman Forum. What has spread the British dominion over the habitable globe, and converted the ocean into a peaceful lake for its internal carriage, and made the winds the instruments of its blessings to mankind, and spread its race in vast and inextinguishable multitudes through the New World? Democratic ambition. Democratic ambition, restrained and regulated at home by an adequate weight of aristocratic power; a government which, guided by the stability of the patrician, but invigorated by the activity of the plebeian race, steadily advanced in conquest, renown, and moral ascendency, till its fleets overspread the sea, and it has become a matter of certainty that half the globe must be peopled by its descendants.

The continued operation of this undying vigour and energy is still more clearly evinced in the Anglo-American race, which originally sprung from the stern Puritans of Charles I.'s age, which have developed all the peculiarities of the democratic character in unrestrained profusion amidst the boundless wastes which lie open to their enterprise. M. Tocqueville has described, with equal justice and eloquence, the extraordinary activity of these principles in the United States.

"The inhabitants of the United States are never fettered by the axioms of their profession; they escape from all the prejudices of their present station; they are not more attached to one line of operation than to another; they are not more prone to employ an old method than a new one; they have no rooted habits, and they easily shake off the influence which the habits of other nations might exercise upon their minds, from a conviction that their country is unlike any other, and that its situation is without a precedent in the world. America is a land of wonders, in which everything is in constant motion, and every movement seems an improvement. The idea of novelty is there indissolubly connected with the idea of amelioration. No natural boundary seems to be set to the efforts of man; and what is not yet done is only what he has not yet attempted to do.

"This perpetual change which goes on in the United States, these frequent vicissitudes of fortune, accompanied by such unforeseen fluctuations in private and in public wealth, serve to keep the minds of the citizens in a

perpetual state of feverish agitation, which admirably invigorates their exertions, and keeps them in a state of excitement above the ordinary level of mankind. The whole life of an American is passed like a game of chance, a revolutionary crisis, or a battle. As the same causes are continually in operation throughout the country, they ultimately impart an irresistible impulse to the national character. The American, taken as a chance specimen of his countrymen, must then be a man of singular warmth in his desires, enterprising, fond of adventure, and above all of innovation. The same bent is manifest in all that he does: he introduces it into his political laws, his religious doctrines, his theories of social economy, and his domestic occupations; he bears it with him in the depth of the backwoods, as well as in the business of the city. It is this same passion, applied to maritime commerce, which makes him the cheapest and the quickest trader in the world.

"It is not impossible to conceive the surpassing liberty which the Americans enjoy; some idea may likewise be formed of the extreme equality which subsists amongst them; but the political activity which pervades the United States must be seen in order to be understood. No sooner do you set foot upon the American soil than you are stunned by a kind of tumult; a confused clamour is heard on every side; and a thousand simultaneous voices demand the immediate satisfaction of their social wants. Everything is in motion around you: here, the people of one quarter of a town are met to decide upon the building of a church; there, the election of a representative is going on; a little further, the delegates of a district are posting to the town, in order to consult upon some local improvements; or in another place, the labourers of a village quit their ploughs to deliberate upon the project of a road or a public school. Meetings are called for the sole purpose of declaring their disapprobation of the line of conduct pursued by the Government; whilst, in other assemblies, the citizens salute the authorities of the day as the fathers of their country. Societies are formed which regard drunkenness as the principal cause of the evils under which the state labours, and which solemnly bind themselves to give a constant example of temperance.

"The great political agitation of the American legislative bodies, which is the only kind of excitement that attracts the attention of foreign countries, is a mere episode or a sort of continuation of that universal movement which originates in the lowest classes of the people, and extends successively to all the ranks of society. It is impossible to spend more efforts in the pursuit of enjoyment."

The great system of nature thus expands to our view. The democratic principle is the chief moving power which expels from the old-established centres of civilisation the race of men to distant and unpeopled regions; which in the ancient world spread it with the Athenian galleys along the shores of the Mediterranean, and with the Roman legions penetrated the dark and savage forests of central Europe; which laid the foundation, in the kingdoms formed out of its provinces, of the supremacy of modern Europe, and is now with the British navy extending as far as the waters of the ocean roll, peopling at once the new continent of Australasia and supplanting the sable millions of Africa; piercing the primeval forests of Canada, and advancing with unceasing velocity towards the Rocky Mountains of America. Nor is it

only by the subjects of Britain that this impelling force is felt. It exists in equal force among their descendants; and from the seats where the Puritan contemporaries of Cromwell first sought an asylum from English oppression, an incessant craving, an unseen power, is for ever impelling multitudes to the yet untrodden forests of the West.

"It cannot be denied that the British race has acquired an amazing preponderance over all the other European races in the New World; and that it is very superior to them in civilisation, in industry, and in power. As long as it is only surrounded by desert or thinly-peopled countries, as long as it encounters no dense population upon its route, through which it cannot work its way, it will assuredly continue to spread. The lines marked out by treaties will not stop it; but it will everywhere transgress these imaginary barriers.

"The geographical position of the British race in the New World is peculiarly favourable to its rapid increase. Above its northern frontiers the icy regions of the Pole extend; and a few degrees below its southern confines lies the burning climate of the Equator. The Anglo-Americans are therefore placed in the most temperate and habitable zone of the continent.

"The distance from Lake Superior to the Gulf of Mexico extends from the 47th to the 30th degree of latitude, a distance of more than 1200 miles, as the bird flies. The frontier of the United States winds along the whole of this immense line; sometimes falling within its limits, but more frequently extending far beyond it into the waste. It has been calculated that the Whites advance every year a mean distance of seventeen miles along the whole of this vast boundary. Obstacles, such as an unproductive district, a lake, or an Indian nation unexpectedly encountered, are sometimes met with. The advancing column then halts for a while; its two extremities fall back upon themselves, and as soon as they are reunited they proceed onwards. This gradual and continuous progress of the European race towards the Rocky Mountains has the solemnity of a Providential event; it is like a deluge of men rising unabatedly, and daily driven onwards by the hand of God.

"Within this first line of conquering settlers towns are built, and vast States founded. In 1790 there were only a few thousand pioneers sprinkled along the valleys of the Mississippi; and at the present day these valleys contain as many inhabitants as were to be found in the whole Union in 1790. Their population amounts to nearly four millions. The city of Washington was founded in 1800, in the very centre of the Union; but such are the changes which have taken place, that it now stands at one of the extremities; and the delegates of the most remote Western States are already obliged to perform a journey as long as that from Vienna to Paris.

"It must not, then, be imagined that the impulse of the British race in the New World can be arrested. The dismemberment of the Union, and the hostilities which might ensue, the abolition of republican institutions, and the tyrannical government which might succeed it, may retard this impulse, but they cannot prevent it from ultimately fulfilling the destinies to which that race is reserved. No power upon earth can close upon the emigrants that fertile wilderness, which offers resources to all industry, and a refuge from all want. Future events, of whatever nature they may be, will not deprive the Americans of their climate or of their inland seas, of their great rivers or of their exuberant soil. Nor will bad laws, revolutions, and anarchy be able to obliterate that love of prosperity and that spirit of enterprise which seem to be the distinctive characteristics of their race, or to extinguish that knowledge which guides them on their way.

"Thus, in the midst of the uncertain future, one event at least is sure. At a period which may be said to be near, (for we are speaking of the life of a nation,) the Anglo-Americans will alone cover the immense space contained between the Polar regions and the Tropics, extending from the coast of the Atlantic to the shores of the Pacific Ocean; the territory which will probably be occupied by the Anglo-Americans at some future time, may be computed to equal three-quarters of Europe in extent. The climate of the Union is upon the whole preferable to that of Europe, and its natural advantages are not less great; it is therefore evident that its population will at some future time be proportionate to our own. Europe, divided as it is between so many different nations, and torn as it has been by incessant wars and the barbarous manners of the Middle Ages, has notwithstanding attained a population of 410 inhabitants to the square league. What cause can prevent the United States from having as numerous a population in time?"

"The time will therefore come when one hundred and fifty millions of men will be living in North America, equal in condition, the progeny of one race, owing their origin to the same cause, and preserving the same civilisation, the same language, the same religion, the same habits, the same manners, and imbued with the same opinions, propagated under the same forms. The rest is uncertain, but this is certain; and it is a fact new to the world, a fact fraught with such portentous consequences as to baffle the efforts even of the imagination."

It is not without reason, therefore, that we set out in this speculation, with the observation, that great and durable effects on human affairs are destined by Providence for the British race. And it is too obvious to admit of dispute that the democratic principle amongst us is the great moving power which thus impels multitudes of civilised beings into the wilderness of nature. Nothing but that principle could effect such a change. Civilised man rarely emigrates; under a despotic government, never. What colonies has China sent forth to people the wastes of Asia? Are the Hindoos to be found spread over the vast archipelago of the Indian Ocean? Republican Rome colonised the world; Republican Greece spread the light of civilisation along the shores of the Mediterranean; but Imperial Rome could never maintain the numbers of its own provinces, and the Grecian Empire slumbered on with a declining population for eleven hundred years. Is Italy, with its old civilised millions, or France, with its ardent and redundant peasantry, the storehouse of nations from whence the European race is to be diffused over the world? The colonies of Spain, torn by internal factions, and a prey to furious passions, are in the most miserable state, and constantly declining in numbers.* The tendency of nations in a high state of civilisation ever

* Tocqueville, ii. 439.

is to remain at home; to become wedded to the luxuries and enjoyments, the habits and refinements of an artificial state of existence, and regard all other people as rude and barbarous, unfit for the society, unequal to the reception of civilised existence, to slumber on for ages with a population poor, redundant, and declining. Such has for ages been the condition of the Chinese and the Hindoos, the Turks and the Persians, the Spaniards and the Italians; and hence no great settlements of mankind have proceeded from their loins. What, then, is the centrifugal force which counteracts this inert tendency, and impels man from the heart of wealth, from the bosom of refinement, from the luxuries of civilisation, to the forests and the wilderness? What sends him forth into the desert, impelled by the energy of the savage character, but yet with all the powers and acquisitions of civilisation at his command; with the axe in his hand, but the Bible in his pocket, and the Encyclopedia by his side? It is democracy which effects this prodigy; it is that insatiable passion which overcomes alike the habits and affections of society, and sends forth the civilised pilgrim far from his kindred, far from his home, far from the bones of his fathers, to seek amidst Transatlantic wilds that freedom and independence which his native country can no longer afford. It is in the restless activity which it engenders, the feverish desire of elevation which it awakens in all classes, the longing after a state of existence unattainable in long-established states which it produces, that the centrifugal force of civilised man is to be found. Above a hundred thousand emigrants from Great Britain in the year 1833 settled in the British colonies; nearly two hundred thousand annually pass over to the whole of North America from the British isles; and amidst the strife of parties, the collision of interests, the ardent hopes and chimerical anticipations incident to these days of transition, the English race is profusely and indelibly transplanted into the boundless wastes prepared for its reception in the New World.

As the democratic passion, however, is thus evidently the great moving power which is transferring the civilised European race to the remote corners of the earth, and the British navy the vast vehicle raised up to supreme dominion for its conveyance; so it is of the utmost importance to observe

that, if undue power is given to this impelling force, the machine which is performing these prodigies may be destroyed, and the central force, instead of operating with a steady and salutary pressure upon mankind, suddenly burst its barriers, and for ever cease to affect their fortunes. A spring acts upon a machine only as long as it is loaded or restrained; remove the pressure, and its strength ceases to exist. This powerful and astonishing agency of the British race upon the fortunes of mankind would be totally destroyed by the triumph of Democracy in these islands. Multitudes, indeed, during the convulsions consequent on so calamitous an event, would fly for refuge to the American shores; but, in the grinding and irreversible despotism which would necessarily and speedily follow its occurrence, the vital energy would become extinct which is now impelling the British race into every corner of the habitable earth. The stillness of absolute government would succeed the agitation of passion; the inertness of aged civilisation at once fall upon the bounded state. From the moment that British freedom is extinguished by the overthrow of aristocratic influence, and the erection of the Commons into unrestrained power, the sacred fire which now animates the vast fabric of its dominion will become extinct, and England will cease to direct the destinies of half the globe. The Conservative party in this country, therefore, are not merely charged with the preservation of its own freedom—they are intrusted with the destinies of mankind. On the success of their exertions it depends, whether the democratic spirit in these islands is to be preserved, as heretofore, in that subdued form which has directed its energy to the civilisation of mankind, or to burst forth in those wild excesses which turn only to its own ruin, and the desolation of the world.

While the naval strength and colonial dominions of England have steadily and unceasingly advanced in Western Europe, and its influence is, in consequence, spread over all the maritime regions of the globe, another, and an equally irresistible power has risen up in the Eastern Hemisphere. If all the contests of centuries have turned to the advantage of the English navy, all the Continental strifes have, as unceasingly, augmented the strength of

Russia. From the time of the Czar Peter, when it first emerged from obscurity to take a leading part in Continental affairs, to the present moment, its progress has been unbroken. Alone, of all other states, during that long period it has experienced no reverses, but constantly advanced in power, territory, and resources; for even the peace of Tilsit, which followed the disasters of Austerlitz and Friedland, was attended with an accession of territory. During that period it has successively swallowed up Courland and Livonia, Poland, Finland, the Crimea, the Ukraine, Wallachia, and Moldavia. Its southern frontier is now washed by the Danube; its eastern is within fifty leagues of Berlin and Vienna; its advanced ports in the Baltic are almost within sight of Stockholm; its south-eastern boundary, stretching far over the Caucasus, sweeps down to Erivan and the foot of Mount Ararat; Persia and Turkey are irrevocably subjected to its influence; a solemn treaty has given it the command of the Dardanelles; a subsidiary Muscovite force has visited Scutari, and rescued the Osmanlis from destruction; and the Sultan Mahmoud retains Constantinople only as the viceroy of the northern autocrat.

The politicians of the day assert that Russia will fall to pieces, and its power cease to be formidable to Western Europe or Central Asia. They never were more completely mistaken. Did Macedonia fall to pieces before it had subdued the Grecian commonwealths; or Persia before it had conquered the Assyrian monarchy; or the Goths and Vandals before they had subverted the Roman empire? It is the general pressure of the north upon the south, not the force of any single state, which is the weight that is to be apprehended; that pressure will not be lessened, but, on the contrary, greatly increased, if the vast Scythian tribes should separate into different empires. Though one Muscovite throne were to be established at St Petersburg, a second at Moscow, and a third at Constantinople, the general pressure of the Russian race upon the southern states of Europe and Asia would not be one whit diminished. Still the delight of a warmer climate, the riches of long-established civilisation, the fruits and wines of the south, the women of Italy or Circassia, would attract the brood of winter to the regions of the sun. The various tribes of the German race, the

Gothic and Vandal swarms, the Huns and the Ostrogoths, were engaged in fierce and constant hostility with each other; and it was generally defeat and pressure from behind which impelled them upon their southern neighbours; but that did not prevent them from bursting the barriers of the Danube and the Rhine, and overwhelming the civilisation, and wealth, and discipline, of the Roman empire. Such internal divisions only magnify the strength of the northern race by training them to the use of arms, and augmenting their military skill by constant exercise against each other; just as the long-continued internal wars of the European nations have established an irresistible superiority of their forces over those of the other quarters of the globe. In the end the weight of the north, thus matured, drawn forth, and disciplined, will ever be turned to the fields of southern conquest.

The moving power with these vast bodies of men is the lust of conquest, and a passion for southern enjoyment. Democracy is unheeded or unknown amongst them; if imported from foreign lands, it languishes and expires amidst the rigours of the climate. The energy and aspirations of men are concentrated on conquest—a passion more natural, more durable, more universal, than the democratic vigour of advanced civilisation. It speaks a language intelligible to the rudest of men, and rouses passions of universal vehemence. Great changes may take place in human affairs; but the time will never come when northern valour will not press on southern wealth, or refined corruption not require the renovating influence of indigent regeneration.

This, then, is the other great moving power which, in these days of transition, is changing the destinies of mankind. Rapid as is the growth of the British race in America, it is not more rapid than that of the Russian in Europe and Asia. Fifty millions of men now furnish recruits to the Muscovite standards; but their race doubles in every half century; and before the year 1900, one hundred millions of men will be ready to pour from the frozen plains of Scythia on the plains of central Asia and southern Europe. Occasional events may check, or for a while turn aside the wave; but its ultimate progress in these directions is certain and irresistible. Before two centuries are over, Mahometanism will be banished from Turkey, Asia Minor, and Persia, and a

hundred millions of Christians will be settled in the regions now desolated by the standards of the Prophet. Their advance is as swift, as unceasing, as that of the British race to the rocky belt of Western America. M. de Tocqueville has pointed out this marvellous coincidence in the tendency of the progress of the two greatest nations now on the earth.

"There are, at the present time, two great nations in the world, which seem to tend towards the same end, although they started from different points,—I allude to the Russians and the Americans. Both of them have grown up unnoticed; and whilst the attention of mankind was directed elsewhere, they have suddenly assumed a most prominent place among the nations; and the world learned their existence and their greatness at almost the same time.

"All other nations seem to have nearly reached their natural limits, and only to be charged with the maintenance of their power; but these are still in the act of growth: all the others are stopped, or continue to advance with extreme difficulty; these are proceeding with ease and with celerity along a path to which the human eye can assign no term. The American struggles against the natural obstacles which oppose him; the adversaries of the Russian are men: the former combats the wilderness and savage life; the latter, civilisation with all its weapons and its arts: the conquests of the one are therefore gained by the ploughshare; those of the other by the sword. The Anglo-American relies upon personal interest to accomplish his ends, and gives free scope to the unguided exertions and common sense of the citizens; the Russian centres all the authority of society in a single arm; the principal instrument of the former is freedom, of the latter, servitude. Their starting-point is different, and their courses are not the same; yet each of them seems to be marked out by the will of Heaven to sway the destinies of half the globe."

There is something solemn, and evidently Providential, in this ceaseless advance of the lords of the earth and the sea into the desert regions of the earth. The hand of Almighty Power is distinctly visible, not only in the unbroken advance of both on their respective elements, but in the evident adaptation of the passions, habits, and government of each to the ends for which they were severally destined in the designs of nature. Could Russian conquest have ever peopled the dark and untrodden forests of North America, or the desert Savannas of Australasia? Could the passions and the desires of the North have ever led them into the abode of the beaver and the buffalo? Never; for aught that their passions could have done, these regions must have remained in primeval solitude and silence to the end of time. Could English democracy ever have penetrated the half-peopled, half-desert regions of Asia, and Christian civilisation, spreading in peaceful activity, have supplanted the Crescent in the original seats of the human race?

Never; the isolated colonist, with his axe and his Bible, would have been swept away by the Mameluke or the Spahi, and civilisation, in its peaceful guise, would have perished under the squadrons of the Crescent. For aught that democracy could have done for Central Asia, it must have remained the abode of anarchy and misrule to the end of human existence. But peaceful Christianity, urged on by democratic passions, pierced the primeval solitude of the American forests: and warlike Christianity, stimulated by northern conquest, was fitted to subdue Central Asia and Eastern Europe. The Bible and the printing-press converted the wilderness of North America into the abode of Christian millions; the Muscovite battalions, marching under the standard of the Cross, subjugated the already peopled regions of the Mussulman faith. Not without reason, then, did the British navy and the Russian army emerge triumphant from the desperate strife of the French Revolution; for on the victory of each depended the destinies of half the globe.

Democratic institutions will not, and cannot, exist permanently in North America. The frightful anarchy which has prevailed in the southern states, since the great interests dependent on slave emancipation were brought into jeopardy; the irresistible sway of the majority, and the rapid tendency of that majority to deeds of atrocity and blood; the increasing jealousy, on mercantile grounds, of the northern and southern states—all demonstrate that the Union cannot permanently hold together, and that the innumerable millions of the Anglo-American race must be divided into separate states, like the descendants of the Gothic conquerors of Europe. Out of this second great settlement of mankind will arise separate kingdoms, and interests, and passions, as out of the first. But democratic habits and desires will still prevail; and long after necessity and the passions of an advanced stage of civilisation have established firm and aristocratic governments, founded on the sway of property in the old states, republican ambition and jealousy will not cease to impel millions into the great wave that approaches the Rocky Mountains. Democratic ideas will not be moderated in the New World, till they have performed their destined end, and brought the Christian race to the shores of the Pacific.

Arbitrary institutions will not for ever prevail in the Russian empire. As successive provinces and kingdoms are added to their vast dominions—as their sway extends over the regions of the south, the abode of wealth and long-established civilisation, the passion for conquest will expire. Satiety will extinguish this as it does all other desires. With the acquisition of wealth, and the settlement in fixed abodes, the desire of protection from arbitrary power will spring up, and the passion of freedom will arise as it did in Greece, Italy, and modern Europe. Free institutions will ultimately appear in the realms conquered by Muscovite, as they did in those won by Gothic valour. But the passions and desires of an earlier stage of existence will long agitate the millions of the Russo-Asiatic race; and after democratic desires have arisen, and free institutions exist in its oldest provinces, the wave of northern conquest will still be pressed on by semi-barbarous hordes from its remoter dominions. Freedom will gradually arise out of security and repose; but the fever of conquest will not be finally extinguished till it has performed its destined mission, and the standards of the Cross are brought down to the Indian Ocean.

The French Revolution was the greatest and the most stupendous event of modern times; it is from the throes consequent on its explosion that all the subsequent changes in human affairs have arisen. It sprang up in the spirit of infidelity; it was early steeped in crime; it reached the unparalleled height of general atheism, and shook all the thrones of the world by the fiery passions which it awakened. What was the final result of this second revolt of Lucifer, the Prince of the Morning? Was it that a great and durable impression on human affairs was made by the infidel race? Was St Michael at last chained by the demon? No! it was overruled by Almighty Power; on either side it found the brazen walls which it could not pass; it sank in the conflict, and ceased to have any farther direct influence on human affairs. In defiance of all its efforts, the British navy and the Russian army rose invincible above its arms; the champions of Christianity in the East and the leaders of religious freedom in the West came forth, like giants refreshed with wine, from the

termination of the fight. The infidel race which aimed at the dominion of the world, served only by their efforts to increase the strength of its destined rulers; and from amidst the ruins of its power emerged the ark which was to carry the tidings of salvation to the Western, and the invincible host which was to spread the glad tidings of the gospel through the Eastern world.

Great, however, as were the powers thus let into human affairs, their operation must have been comparatively slow, and their influence inconsiderable, but for another circumstance, which at the same time came into action. But a survey of human affairs leads to the conclusion, that when important changes in the social world are about to take place, a lever is not long of being supplied to work out the prodigy. With the great religious change of the sixteenth century arose the art of printing; with the vast revolutions of the nineteenth, an agent of equal efficacy was provided. At the time when the fleets of England were riding omnipotent on the ocean, at the very moment when the gigantic hosts of infidel and revolutionary power were scattered by the icy breath of winter, STEAM NAVIGATION was brought into action, and an agent appeared upon the theatre of the universe destined to break through the most formidable barriers of nature. In January 1812, not one steam-vessel existed in the world; now, on the Mississippi alone, there are a hundred and sixty. Vain hereafter are the waterless deserts of Persia, or the snowy ridges of the Himalaya—vain the impenetrable forests of America, or the deadly jungles of Asia. Even the death-bestridden gales of the Niger must yield to the force of scientific enterprise, and the fountains of the Nile themselves emerge from the awful obscurity of six thousand years. The great rivers of the world are fast becoming the highways of civilisation and religion. The Russian battalions will securely commit themselves to the waves of the Euphrates, and waft again to the plains of Shinar the blessings of regular government and a beneficent faith; remounting the St Lawrence and the Missouri, the British emigrants will carry into the solitudes of the Far West the Bible and the wonders of English genius. Spectators of, or actors in, so marvellous a progress, let us act as becomes

men called to such mighty destinies in human affairs. Let us never forget that it is to *regulated freedom* alone that these wonders are to be ascribed; and contemplate in the degraded and impotent condition of France, when placed beside these giants of the earth, the natural and deserved result of the revolutionary passions and unbridled ambition which extinguished prospects once as fair, and destroyed energies once as powerful, as those which now direct the destinies of half the globe.

AUTOBIOGRAPHY

[BLACKWOOD'S MAGAZINE, SEPTEMBER 1849]

AUTOBIOGRAPHY, when skilfully and judiciously done, is one of the most delightful species of composition of which literature can boast. There is a strong desire in every intelligent and well-informed mind to become familiar with the private thoughts, and secret motives of action, of those who have filled the world with their renown. We long to learn their early history, to be made acquainted with their first aspirations, to discover how they became so great as they afterwards turned out. Perhaps literature has sustained no greater loss than that of the memoirs which Hannibal wrote of his life and campaigns. From the few fragments of his sayings which Roman admiration or terror has preserved, his reach of thought and statesmanlike sagacity would appear to have been equal to his military talents. Cæsar's *Commentaries* have always been admired; but there is some doubts whether they really were written by the dictator; and, supposing they were, they relate almost entirely to military movements and public events, without giving much insight into private character. It is that which we desire in autobiography: we hope to find in it a window by which we may look into a great man's mind. Plutarch's *Lives* owe their vast and enduring popularity to the insight into private character which the innumerable anecdotes he has collected of the heroes and statesmen of antiquity afford; and the lasting reputation of Boswell's *Johnson* is mainly to be ascribed to the same cause.

Mémoires d'Outre Tombe. Par M. le VICOMTE DE CHATEAUBRIAND. 4 vols. Paris: 1846–9.

Raphael. Par M. DE LAMARTINE.

Gibbon's autobiography is the most perfect account of an eminent man's life, from his own hand, which exists in any language. Independent of the interest which naturally belongs to it as the record of the studies, and the picture of the growth of the mind of the greatest historian of modern times, it possesses a peculiar charm from the simplicity with which it is written, and the judgment it displays, conspicuous alike in what is revealed and what is withheld in the narrative. It steers the middle channel so difficult to find, so invaluable when found, between ridiculous vanity on the one side, and affected modesty on the other. We see, from many passages in it, that the author was fully aware of the vast contribution he had made to literature, and the firm basis on which he had built his colossal fame. But he had good sense enough to see that those great qualities were never so likely to impress the reader, as when only cautiously alluded to by the author. He knew that vanity and ostentation never fail to make the character in which they predominate ridiculous—if excessive, contemptible; and that, although the world would thankfully receive all the details, how minute soever, connected with his immortal work, they would not take off his hands any symptom of himself entertaining the opinion of it which all others have formed. It is the consummate judgment with which Gibbon has given enough of the details connected with the preparation of his works to be interesting, and not enough to be ridiculous, which constitutes the great charm, and has occasioned the marked success, of his autobiography. There are few passages in the English language so popular as the well-known ones in which he has recounted the first conception and final completion of his history, which, as models of the kind, as well as passages of exquisite beauty, we cannot refuse ourselves the pleasure of transcribing, the more especially as they will set off, by way of contrast, the faults in some parallel passages attempted by Chateaubriand and Lamartine.

"At the distance of twenty-five years, I can neither forget nor express the strong emotions which agitated my mind as I first approached and entered the Eternal City. After a sleepless night, I trod with a lofty step the ruins of the Forum. Each memorable spot—where Romulus stood, or Tully spoke, or Cæsar fell—was at once present to my eyes; and several days of intoxication were lost, or enjoyed, before I could descend to a cool and minute investigation. It was at Rome, on the 15th October 1764, as

I sat musing amidst the ruins of the Capitol, while the barefooted friars were singing vespers in the Temple of Jupiter, that the idea of writing this Decline and Fall of the city first started to my mind. But my original plan was circumscribed to the decay of the city, rather than of the empire; and though my reading and reflections began to point towards that object, some years elapsed, and several avocations intervened, before I was seriously engaged in the execution of that laborious work."—*Life*, p. 198, 8vo edition.

Again, the well-known description of the conclusion of his labours :—

"I have presumed to mark the moment of conception: I shall now commemorate the hour of my final deliverance. It was on the day, or rather night, of the 27th June 1787, between the hours of eleven and twelve, that I wrote the last lines of the last page, in a summer-house in my garden. After laying down my pen, I took several turns in a *berceau*, or covered walk of acacias, which commands a prospect of the country, the lake, and mountains. The air was temperate, the sky was serene, the silver orb of the moon was reflected from the waters, and all nature was silent. I will not dissemble the first emotions of joy on recovery of my freedom, and perhaps the establishment of my fame. But my pride was soon humbled, and a sober melancholy was spread over my mind, by the idea that I had taken an everlasting leave of an old and agreeable companion; and that, whatever might be the future fate of my History, the life of the historian must be short and precarious."—*Life*, p. 255, 8vo edition.

Hume's account of his own life is a model of perspicuity, modesty, and good sense; but it is so brief that it scarcely can be called a biography. It is not fifty pages long. The wary Scotch author was well aware how vanity in such compositions defeats its own object : he had too much good sense to let it appear in his pages. Perhaps, however, the existence of such a feeling in the recesses of his breast may be detected in the prominent manner in which he brings forward the discouragement he experienced when the first volume of his History was published, and the extremely limited sale it met with for some time after its first appearance. He knew well how these humble beginnings would be contrasted with its subsequent triumphant success. Amidst his many great and good qualities, there is none for which Sir Walter Scott was more admirable than the unaffected simplicity and good sense of his character, which led him to continue through life utterly unspotted by vanity, and unchanged by an amount of adulation from the most fascinating quarters, which would probably have turned the head of any other man. Among the many causes of regret which the world has for the

catastrophes which overshadowed his latter years, it is not the least that it prevented the completion of that autobiography with which Mr Lockhart has commenced his *Life*. His simplicity of character, and the vast number of eminent men with whom he was intimate, as well as the merit of that fragment itself, leave no room for doubt that he would have made a most charming memoir, if he had lived to complete it. This observation does not detract in the slightest degree from the credit justly due to Mr Lockhart, for his admirable *Life* of his illustrious father-in-law: on the contrary, it forms its highest encomium. The charm of that work is mainly owing to its being so imbued with the spirit of the subject, that it may almost be regarded as an autobiography.

Continental writers of note have, more than English ones, fallen into that error which is of all others the most fatal in autobiography—inordinate vanity. At the head of all the delinquents of this class we must place Rousseau, whose celebrated *Confessions* contain a revelation of folly so extreme, vanity so excessive, and baseness so disgraceful, that it would pass for incredible if not proved by the book itself, which is to be found in every library. Not content with affirming, when past fifty, that there was no woman of fashion of whom he might not have made the conquest if he had chosen to set about it,* he thought fit to entertain the world with all the private details of his life, which the greater prudence of his most indiscreet biographers would have consigned to oblivion. No one who wishes to discredit the Genevese philosopher, need seek in the works of others for the grounds of doing so. Enough is to be found in his own to consign him to eternal execration and contempt. He has told us equally in detail, and with the same air of infantine simplicity, how he committed a theft when in service as a lackey, and permitted an innocent girl, his fellow-servant, to bear the penalty of it; how he alternately drank the wine in his master's cellars, and made love to his wife; how he corrupted one female benefactress who had sheltered him in extremity of want, and afterwards made a boast of her disgrace; and abandoned a

* "Il y a peu des femmes, même dans le haut rang, dont je n'eusse fait la conquête si je l'avais enterprise."—*Biographie Universelle*, xxxix. 136.

male benefactor who fell down in a fit of apoplexy on the streets of Lyons, and left him lying on the pavement, deserted by the only friend whom he had in the world. The author of so many eloquent declamations against mothers neglecting their children, on his own admission, when in easy circumstances, and impelled by no necessity, consigned *five* of his natural children to a foundling hospital, with such precautions against their being known that he never did or could hear of them again! Such was his vanity, that he thought the world would gladly feed on the crumbs of this sort which fell from the table of the man rich in genius. His grand theory was, that the human mind is born innocent, with dispositions only to good, and that all the evils of society arise from the follies of education or the oppression of Government. Judging from the picture he has presented of himself, albeit debased by no education but what he himself had afforded, we should say his disposition was more corrupt than has ever been imagined by the most dark-minded and bigoted Calvinist that ever existed.

Alfieri was probably as vain in reality as Rousseau; but he knew better how to conceal it. He had not the folly of supposing that he could entertain women by the boastful detail of his conquests over them. He judged wisely, and more like a man who had met with *bonnes fortunes*, that he would attain more effectually the object of interesting their feelings, by painting their conquests over him. He has done this so fully, so sincerely, and with such eloquence, that he has made one of the most powerful pieces of biography in any language. Its charm consists in the picture he has drawn, with equal truth and art, of a man of the most impetuous and ardent temperament, alternately impelled by the strongest passions which can agitate the breast — love and ambition. Born of a noble family, inheriting a great fortune, he exhibited an uncommon combination of patrician tastes and feelings with republican principles and aspirations. He was a democrat because he knew the great by whom he was surrounded, and did not know the humble who were removed to a distance. He said this himself, after witnessing at Paris the horrors of the 10th August:—" Je connais bien les grands, *mais je ne*

connais pas les petits." He drew the vices of the former from observation, he painted the virtues of the latter from imagination. Hence the absurdity and unnatural character of many of his dramas, which, to the inhabitant of our free country, who is familiar with the real working of popular institutions, render them, despite their genius, quite ridiculous. But, in the delineation of what passed in his own breast, he is open to no such reproach. His picture of his own feelings is as forcible and dramatic as that of any he has drawn in his tragedies; and it is far more truthful, for it is taken from nature, not an imaginary world of his own creation, having little resemblance to that we see around us. His character and life were singularly calculated to make such a narrative interesting, for never was one more completely tossed about by vehement passions, and abounding with melodramatic incidents. Alternately dreaming over the most passionate attachments, and labouring of his own accord at Dante fourteen hours a-day; at one time making love to an English nobleman's wife, and fighting him in the Park, at another driving through France with fourteen blood horses in harness; now stealing from the Pretender his queen, now striving to emulate Sophocles in the energy of his picture of the passions, he was himself a living example of the intensity of those feelings which he has so powerfully portrayed in his dramas. It is this variety, joined to the simplicity and candour of the confessions, which constitutes the very charm of this very remarkable autobiography. It could have been written by no one but himself; for an ordinary biographer would only have described the incidents of his life, none else could have painted the vehement passions, the ardent aspirations, from which they sprang.

From the sketches of Goethe's life which have been preserved, it is evident that, though probably not less vain than the French philosopher or the Italian poet, his vanity took a different direction from either of theirs. He was neither vain of his turpitudes, like Rousseau, nor of his passions, like Alfieri. His self-love was of a more domestic kind; it was characterised more by the home-scenes of the Fatherland. No one will question the depth of Goethe's knowledge of the heart, or the sagacity of the light which his

genius has thrown on the most profound feelings of human nature. But his private life partook of the domestic affections and unobtrusive rest in which it was passed, exempt alike from the grinding poverty which too often impelled the Genevese watchmaker's son into disgraceful actions, or the vehement passions which drove the Italian nobleman into brilliant crimes. Hence his biography exhibits an extraordinary mixture of lofty feelings with puerile simplicity, of depth of views with childishness, of divine philosophy with homely inclinations. Amidst all his enthusiasm and effusions of sentiment, he was as much under the influence as any man of creature-comforts; and never hesitated to leave the most lofty efforts of the muse, to participate in the substantial advantages of rich preserves or sweet cakes. This singular mixture arose, in a great measure, from the habits of his life, and the limited circle by which, during the greater part of it, he was surrounded. Living with a few friends in the quiet seclusion of a small German town, the object of almost superstitious admiration to a few females by whom he was surrounded, he became at once a little god of his own and their idolatry, and warmly inclined, like monks all over the world, to the innocent but not very elevating pleasures of breakfast and dinner. Mahomet said that he experienced more difficulty in persuading his four wives of his divine mission than all the rest of the world besides; and this, says Gibbon, was not surprising, for they knew best his weaknesses as a man. Goethe thought, on the same principle, his fame was secure, when he was worshipped as a god by his female coterie. He had the highest opinion of his own powers, and of the lofty mission on which he was sent to mankind; but his self-love was less offensive than that of Rousseau, because it was more unobtrusive. It was allied rather to pride than vanity; and though pride may often be hateful, it is never contemptible.

The *Life of Lord Byron* which Moore has published leaves no room for doubt, that the latter acted wisely in consigning the original manuscript of the noble poet's autobiography to the flames. Assuming that a considerable part of that biography is taken from what the noble bard had left of himself, it is evident that a more complete detail of his feelings and motives of action would have done any-

thing rather than have added to his reputation. In fact, Moore's *Life* has done more than anything else to lower it. The poetical biographer had thought and sung so much of the passions, that he had forgot in what light they are viewed by the generality of men ; he was so deeply imbued with the spirit of his hero, that he had come to regard his errors and vices as not the least interesting part of his life. That they may be so to that class of readers, unhappily too extensive, who are engaged in similar pursuits, is probably true ; but how small a portion do these constitute of the human race, and how weak and inaudible does their applause become, in the progress of time, when compared to the voice of ages ! What has become of the innumerable licentious works whose existence in antiquity has become known from the specimens disinterred in the ruins of Herculaneum ? Is there one of them which has taken its place beside the *Lives of Plutarch?* Whatever is fetid, however much prized at the moment, is speedily sunk in the waves of time. Nothing permanently floats down its stream but what is buoyant from its elevating tendency.

Boswell's *Life of Johnson* is so replete with the sayings and thoughts of the intellectual giant, whom it was so much his object to elevate, even above his natural Patagonian stature, that it may be regarded as a sort of autobiography, dictated by the sage in his moments of *abandon* to his devout worshipper. It is not going too far to say, that it is among the most popular books in the English language. Johnson's reputation now mainly rests on that biography. No one now reads the *Rambler* or the *Idler*—few the *Lives of the Poets,* interesting as they are, and admirable as are the criticisms on our greatest authors which they contain. But Boswell's *Life of Johnson* is in everybody's hands ; you will hear the pithy sayings, the admirable reflections, the sagacious remarks it contains, from one end of the world to the other. The secret of this astonishing success is to be found in the caustic tone, sententious brevity, and sterling good sense of Johnson, and the inimitable accuracy, faithful memory, and almost infantine simplicity of his biographer. From the unbounded admiration with which he was inspired for the sage, and the faithful memory with which he was gifted, he was enabled to commit to paper, almost as they

were delivered, those admirable sayings which have ever since been the delight and admiration of the world. We almost live with the members of the Literary Club; we hear their divers sentiments, and can almost conceive their tones of voice. We see the gigantic form of the sage towering above his intellectual compeers. Burke said that Johnson was greater in conversation than writing, and greater in Boswell than either; and it is easy to conceive that this must have been the case. The *Life* contains all the admirable sayings, *verbatim* as they were delivered, and without the asperity of tone and manner which formed so great a blot in the original deliverer. Johnson's sayings were of a kind which were susceptible of being accurately transferred, and with full effect, to paper, because they were almost all reflections on morals, men, or manners, which are of universal application, and come home to the senses of mankind in every age. In this respect they were much more likely to produce an impression in biography than the conversation of Sir Walter Scott, which, however interesting to those who heard it, especially for the first time, consisted chiefly of anecdotes and stories, great part of the charm of which consisted in the mode of telling and expression of the countenance, which, of course, could not be transferred to paper.

But it is not every eminent man who is so fortunate as to find a biographer like Boswell, who, totally forgetful of self, recorded for posterity, with inimitable fidelity, all the sayings of his hero. Nor is it many men who would bear so faithful and searching an exposure. Johnson, like every other man, had his failings; but they were those of prejudice or manner, rather than morals or conduct. We wish we could say that every other eminent literary man was equally immaculate, or that an entire disclosure of character would, in every case, reveal no more weaknesses or failings than have been brought to light by Boswell's faithful chronicle. We know that every one is liable to err, and that no man is a hero to his *valet-de-chambre*. But being aware of all this, we were not prepared for the immense mass of weaknesses, follies, and errors, which have been brought to light by the indiscreet zeal of biographers, in the character of many of our ablest literary, poetical, and philosophical

characters. Certainly, if we look at the details of their private lives, these men of literary celebrity have had little title to set up as the instructors, or to call themselves the benefactors of mankind. From the days of Milton, whose divine genius was so deeply tarnished by the asperity of his feelings, and the unpardonable license in controversy which he permitted to his tongue, to those of Lord Byron, who scandalised his country and the world by the undisguised profligacy of his private life, the biography of literary men, with a few brilliant exceptions—in the foremost of which we must place Sir Walter Scott—consists in great part of a series of follies, weaknesses, or faults, which it would be well for their memory could they be buried in oblivion. We will not say that the labours of their biographers have been the *Massacre of the Innocents*, for truly there were very few innocents to massacre; but we will say that they have, in general, done more to degrade those they intended to elevate, than the envenomed hostility of their worst enemies. We forbear to mention names, which might give pain to many respectable persons still alive. The persons alluded to, and the truth of the observation, will be at once understood and admitted by every person acquainted with the literary history of France and England during the last century.

Vanity and jealousy—vanity of themselves, jealousy of others—are the great failings which have hitherto tarnished the character and disfigured the biography of literary men. We fear it is destined to continue the same to the end of the world. The qualities which contribute to their greatness, which occasion their usefulness, which insure their fame, are closely allied to failings which too often disfigure their private lives, and form a blot on their memory, when indiscreetly revealed in biography, either by themselves or others. Genius is almost invariably united to susceptibility; and this temperament is unhappily too apt to run into irritability. No one can read Disraeli's essay on *The Literary Character*, the most admirable of his many admirable works, without being convinced of that. Celebrity of any sort is the natural parent of vanity, and this weakness is in a peculiar manner fostered in poets and romance writers, because their writings interest so warmly the fair,

who form the great dispensers of general fame, and convey it in the most flattering form to the author. It would perhaps be unjust to women to say that poets and novelists share in their weaknesses; but it is certain that their disposition is, in general, essentially feminine, and that, as they attract the admiration of the other sex more strongly than any other class of writers, so they are liable in a peculiar degree to the failings, as well as distinguished by the excellencies, by which their female admirers are characterised. We may regret that it is so: we may lament that we cannot find poets and romancers who to the genius of Byron, or the fancy of Moore, unite the sturdy sense of Johnson, or the simplicity of character of Scott; but it is to be feared such a combination is as rare, and as little to be looked for in general life, as the union of the strength of the war-horse to the fleetness of the racer, or the courage of the mastiff to the delicacy of the greyhound. Adam Smith long ago pointed out the distinction between those who serve and those who amuse mankind; and the difference, it is to be feared, exists not merely between the philosopher and the opera-dancer, but between the instructors of men in every department of thought, and those whose genius is devoted rather to the pleasing of the eye, the melting of the feelings, or the kindling of the imagination. Yet this observation is only generally, not universally, true; and Sir Joshua Reynolds remains a memorable proof that it is possible for an artist to unite the highest genius and most imaginative power of mind to the wisdom of a philosopher, the liberality of a gentleman, the benevolence of a Christian, and the simplicity of a child.

We are not at all surprised at the intoxication which seizes the literary men and artists whose genius procures for them the favour or admiration of women. Everybody knows it is the most fascinating and transporting flattery which the mind of man can receive. But we confess we are surprised, and that too not a little, at the *want of sense* which so frequently makes men even of the highest abilities mar the influence of their own genius, and detract from the well-earned celebrity of their own productions, by the indiscreet display of this vanity, which the applause they have met with has produced in their minds. These gentlemen are

charmed with the incense they have received, and of course desirous to augment it, and extend the circle from which it is to be drawn. Well, that is their object; let us consider what means they take to gain it. These consist too often in the most undisguised display of vanity in their conduct, manner, and conversation. Is this the way likely to augment the admiration which they enjoy so much, and are so solicitous to extend? Are they not clear-sighted enough to see that, holding this to be their aim, considering female admiration as the object of their aspirations, they cannot in any way so effectually mar their desires as by permitting the vanity, which the portion of it they have already received has produced, to appear in their manner or conversation? Are they so little versed in the female heart as not to know that as self-love acts, if not in a stronger at least in a more conspicuous way in them than in the other sex, so there is nothing which repels them so effectually as any display of that vanity in men which they are all conscious of in themselves, and nothing attracts them so powerfully as that self-forgetfulness which, estimable in all, is in a peculiar manner graceful and admirable when it is met with in those whom none others can forget? Such a quality is not properly modesty—that is the retiring disposition of those who have not yet won distinction. No man who has done so is ignorant of it, as no woman of beauty is insensible to her charms. It is more nearly allied to good sense, and its invariable concomitant—a due regard for the feelings of others. It not unfrequently exists in the highest degree in those who have the strongest inward consciousness of the services they have rendered to mankind. No man was more unassuming than Kepler, but he wrote in reference to his great discoveries, and the neglect they at first met with, "I may well be a century without a reader, since God Almighty has been six thousand years without such an observer as I." Yet is this universally felt to have been no unworthy effusion of vanity, but a noble expression of great services rendered by one of his most gifted creatures to the glory of the Almighty. Such men as Kepler are proud, but not vain, and proud men do not bring their feelings so prominently or frequently forward as vain ones; for pride rests on the consciousness of superiority, and needs no external

support ; vanity arises from a secret sense of weakness, and thirsts for a perpetual solace from the applause of others.

It is in the French writers that this inordinate weakness of literary men is most conspicuous, and in them it exists to such an extent as, on this side of the Channel, to be altogether ridiculous. Every Frenchman thinks his life worth recording. It was long ago said that the number of unpublished memoirs which exist in France on the war of the League would, if put together, form a large library. If those relating to the war of the Revolution were accumulated, we have no doubt they would fill the *Bibliothèque du Roi.* The number already published exceeds almost the dimensions of any private collection of books. The composition and style of these memoirs is for the most part as curious, and characteristic of French character, as their number is descriptive of their ruling passion. In the age of the religious wars every writer of memoirs seems to have placed himself in the first rank, Henry IV. in the second ; in that of the Revolution, the greater part of the autobiographies scarcely disguise the opinion that, if the first place must be reluctantly conceded to Napoleon Buonaparte, the second must, beyond all question, be assigned to themselves. The Abbé de Pradt expressed the feeling almost every one entertained of himself in France, not the sentiment of an individual man, when he said, " There was one who overturned Napoleon, and that man was me." Most persons in this country will exclaim that this statement is overcharged, and that it is incredible that vanity should so generally pervade the writers of a whole nation. If they will take the trouble to read Lamartine's *Confidences* and *Raphael,* containing the events of his youth, or his *Histoire de la Révolution de* 1848, recently published, they will find ample confirmation of these remarks ; nor are they less conspicuously illustrated by the more elaborate *Mémoires d'Outre Tombe* of Chateaubriand.

One thing is very remarkable, and forcibly illustrates the marked difference in this respect between the character of the French and the English nation. In France all memoirs assume the form of autobiographies : and so general is the thirst for that species of composition that, where a man of any note has not compiled his own life, his papers are put

into the hands of some skilful bookmaker, who speedily dresses them up in the form of an attractive autobiography. This was done with the papers of Brissot, Robespierre, Marshal Ney, Fouché, and a great many others, all of which appeared with the name of their authors, and richly stored with these private papers, though it was morally certain that they could not by possibility have written their own lives. In England nothing of the kind is attempted. Scarcely any of the eminent men in the last age have left their own memoirs; and the papers of the most remarkable of them have been published without any attempt at biography. Thus we have the *Wellington Papers*, the *Marlborough Papers*, the *Nelson Papers*, the *Castlereagh Papers*, published without any autobiography, and only a slight sketch, though in all these cases very ably done, of the author's life by their editor. The lives of the other eminent men of the last age have been given by others, not themselves: as that of Pitt, by Tomline and Gifford; that of Fox, by Trotter; that of Sheridan, by Moore; that of Lord Eldon, by Twiss; that of Lord Sidmouth, by Pellew. There is more here than an accidental diversity: there is a difference arising from a difference of national character. The Englishmen devoted their lives to the public service, and bestowed not a thought on its illustration by themselves; the French mainly thought of themselves when acting in the public service, and considered it chiefly as a means of elevation and self-laudation to themselves.

In justice to the literary men of France, however, it must be stated that, of late years at least, they have been exposed to an amount of temptation, and of food for their self-love, much exceeding anything previously seen among men, and which may go far to account for the extraordinary vanity which they have everywhere evinced. In England, literary distinction is neither the only nor the greatest passport to celebrity. Aristocratic influences remain, and still possess the deepest hold of the public mind; statesmen exist, whose daily speeches in parliament render their names as household words. Fashion exercises an extraordinary and almost inexplicable sway, especially over the fairest part of creation. How celebrated soever an author may be, he will in London soon be brought to his proper level, and a right appreciation

of his situation. He will see himself at once eclipsed by an old nobleman, whose name is fraught with historic glory; by a young marquis, who is an object of solicitude to the mothers and daughters in the room; by a parliamentary orator, who is beginning to acquire distinction in the senate house. We hold this state of things to be eminently favourable to the right character of literary men: for it saves them from trials before which, it is all but certain, both their good sense and their virtue would succumb. But in Paris this salutary check upon individual vanity and presumption is almost entirely awanting. The territorial aristocracy is confiscated and destroyed; titles of honour are abolished; historic names are almost forgotten in the ceaseless whirl of present events; parliamentary orators are in general unpopular, for they are for the most part on the side of power. Nothing remains but the government of mind. The intellectual aristocracy is all in all.

It makes and unmakes kings alternately; produces and stops revolutions; at one time calls a new race to the throne, at another consigns them with disgrace to foreign lands. Cabinets are formed out of the editors of newspapers, intermingled with a few bankers, whom the public convulsions have not yet rendered insolvent; prime ministers are to be found only among successful authors. Thiers, the editor of the *National* and the historian of the Revolution; Guizot, the profound professor of history; Villemain, the eloquent annalist of French literature; Lamartine, the popular traveller, poet, and historian, have been the alternate prime ministers of France since the revolution of 1830. Even the great name of Napoleon cannot save his nephew from the irksomeness of bending to the same necessity. He named Thiers his prime minister at the time of the Boulogne misadventure, he is caressing him now in the salons of the Elysée Bourbon. Successful authors thus in France are surrounded with a halo, and exposed to influences, of which in this country we cannot form a conception. They unite in their persons the fame of Mr Fox and the lustre of Sir Walter Scott; often the political power of Mr Pitt with the celebrity of Lord Byron. Whether such a concentration is favourable either to their present utility or lasting fame, and whether the best school to train authors to be the instructors

of the world is to be found in that which exposes them to the combined influence of its greatest temptations, are questions on which it is not necessary now to enter, but on which posterity will probably have no difficulty in coming to a conclusion.

But while we fully admit that these extraordinary circumstances, unparalleled in the past history of the world, go far to extenuate the blame which must be thrown on the French writers for their extraordinary vanity, they will not entirely exculpate them. Ordinary men may well be carried away by such adventitious and flattering marks of their power; but we cannot accept such an excuse from the first men of the age—men of the clearest intellect, and the greatest acquisitions—whose genius is to charm, whose wisdom is to instruct the world through every succeeding age. If the teachers of men are not to be above the follies and weaknesses which are general and ridiculous in those of inferior capacity, where are we to look for such an exemption? It is a poor excuse for the overweening vanity of a Byron, a Goethe, a Lamartine, or a Chateaubriand, that a similar weakness is to be found in a Madame Grisi or a Mademoiselle Cerito, in the first cantatrice or most admired ballerina of the day. We all know that the professors of these charming arts are too often intoxicated by the applause which they meet with; we excuse or overlook this weakness from respect due to their genius and their sex. But we know, at the same time, that there are some exceptions to the general frailty; and in one enchanting performer, our admiration for talents of the very highest order is enhanced by respect for the simplicity of character and generosity of disposition with which they are accompanied. We desiderate in the men who aspire to direct the thoughts of the world, and have received from nature talents equal to the task, the unaffected singleness of heart, and sterling good sense, which we admire, not less than her admirable powers, in Mademoiselle Jenny Lind.

The faults, or rather frailties, we have alluded to, are in an especial manner conspicuous in two of the most remarkable writers of France of the present century—Lamartine and Chateaubriand. There is some excuse for the vanity of these illustrious men. They have both acquired an endur-

ing fame—their names are known all over the world, and will continue to be so while the French language is spoken on the earth ; and they have both, by their literary talents, been elevated to positions far beyond the rank in society to which they were born, and which might well make an ordinary head reel from the giddy precipices with which it is surrounded. Chateaubriand powerfully aided in crushing Napoleon in 1814, when Europe in arms surrounded Paris : with still more honourable constancy he had resisted him in 1804, when, in the plenitude of his power, he executed the Duke d'Enghien. He became ambassador to London for the Restoration—minister of foreign affairs, and representative of France at the Congress of Verona. He it was who projected and carried into execution the French invasion of the Peninsula in 1823, the only successful expedition of the Restoration. Lamartine's career, if briefer, has been still more dazzling. He aided largely in the movement which overthrew Louis Philippe ; by the force of his genius he obtained the mastery of the movement, "struggled with democracy when it was strongest, and ruled it when it was wildest ;" and had the glory, by his single courage and energy, of saving the character of the revolution from bloodshed, and coercing the Red Republicans in the very tumult of their victory. He has since fallen from power, less from any known delinquencies imputed to him, than from the inherent fickleness of the French people, and the impossibility of their submitting, for any length of time, to the lead of a single individual. The autobiography of two such men cannot be other than interesting and instructive in the highest degree ; and if we see in them much which we in England cannot altogether understand, and which we are accustomed to stigmatise with the emphatic epithet "French," there is much also in them which candour must respect, and an equitable spirit admire.

The great thing which characterises these memoirs, and is sufficient to redeem a multitude of vanities and frailties, is the elevated and chivalrous spirit in which they are composed. In this respect they are a relic, we fear, of the olden time ; a remnant of those ancient days which Mr Burke has so eloquently described in his portrait of Marie Antoinette. That is the spirit which pervades the breasts

of these illustrious men ; and therefore it is that we respect them, and forgive or forget many weaknesses which would otherwise be insupportable in their autobiographies. It is a spirit, however, more akin to a former era than the present ; to the age which produced the crusades, more than that which gave birth to railways ; to the days of Godfrey of Bouillon, rather than those which raised a monument to Mr Hudson. We are by no means convinced, however, that it is not the more likely to be enduring in the future ages of the world ; at least we are sure it will be so, if the sanguine anticipations everywhere formed by the apostles of the movement of the future improvement of the species are destined in any degree to be realised.

Although, however, the hearts of Chateaubriand and Lamartine are stamped with the impress of chivalry, and the principal charm of their writings is owing to its generous spirit, yet we should err greatly if we imagined that they have not shared in the influences of the age in which they lived, and become largely imbued with the more popular and equalising notions which have sprung up in Europe during the last century. They could not have attained the *political* power which they have both wielded if they had not done so ; for no man, be his genius what it may, will ever acquire a practical lead among men, unless his opinions coincide in the main with those of the majority by whom he is surrounded. Chateaubriand's earliest work, written in London in 1793 — the *Essai Historique*—is, in truth, rather of a republican and sceptical tendency ; and it was not till he had travelled in America, and inhaled a nobler spirit amid the solitudes of nature, that the better parts of his nature regained their ascendency, and his fame was established on an imperishable foundation by the publication of *Atala et Réné* and the *Génie du Christianisme*. Throughout his whole career, the influence of his early liberal principles remained conspicuous : albeit a royalist, he was the steady supporter of the freedom of the press, and the extension of the elective suffrage ; and he kept aloof from the government of Louis Philippe, less from aversion to the semi-revolutionary spirit in which it was cradled, than from an honourable fidelity to misfortune, and horror at the selfish corrupt multitude by which it was soon surrounded.

Lamartine's republican principles are universally known. Although descended of a noble family, and largely imbued with feudal feelings, he aided in the revolt which overturned the throne of Louis Philippe in February 1848, and acquired lasting renown by the courage with which he combated the sanguinary spirit of the Red Republicans, when minister of foreign affairs. Both are chivalrous in heart and feeling, rather than opinions; and they thus exhibit curious and instructive instances of the fusion of the moving principle of the olden time with the ideas of the present, and of the manner in which the true spirit of nobility, *forgetfulness of self*, can accommodate itself to the varying circumstances of society, and float, from its buoyant tendency, on the surface of the most fetid stream of subsequent selfishness.

In two works recently published by Lamartine, *Les Confidences* and *Raphael*, certain passages in his autobiography are given. The first recounts the reminiscences of his infancy and childhood; the second, a love-story in his twentieth year. Both are distinguished by the peculiarities, in respect of excellencies and defects, which appear in his other writings. On the one hand, we have an ardent imagination, great beauty of language, a generous heart, the true spirit of poetry, and uncommon pictorial powers. On the other, an almost entire ignorance of human nature, extraordinary vanity, and that susceptibility of mind which is more nearly allied to the feminine than the masculine character. Not but that Lamartine possesses great energy and courage: his conduct, during the revolution of 1848, demonstrates that he possesses these qualities in a very high degree; but that the ardour of his feelings leads him to act and think like women, from their impulses rather than the sober dictates of reason. He is a devout optimist, and firm believer in the innocence of human nature, and indefinite perfectibility of mankind under the influence of republican institutions. Like all other fanatics, he is wholly inaccessible to the force of reason, and altogether beyond the reach of facts, how strong or convincing soever. Accordingly, he remains to this hour entirely convinced of the perfectibility of mankind, although he has recounted, with equal truth and force, that it was almost entirely owing to his own

courage and energy that the revolution was prevented, in its very outset, from degenerating into bloodshed and massacre; and a thorough believer in the ultimate sway of pacific institutions, although he owns that, despite all his zeal and eloquence, the whole Provisional Government, with himself at its head, would on the 16th April have been guillotined or thrown into the Seine, but for the determination and fidelity of three battalions of the *Garde Mobile* whom Changarnier volunteered to arrange in all the windows and avenues of the Hotel de Ville, when it was assailed by a column of thirty thousand furious revolutionists.

Raphael is the most remarkable and interesting of these sketches of Lamartine's early life. Opinions will probably be generally divided upon it, as they are at present, so long as he continues to be read in the world. The young, the ardent, the enthusiastic, those who have felt or feel the passions of life, will ever dwell on it with deep interest, and class some passages in it with those well-known ones in *Romeo and Juliet*, or *Corinne*, which have depicted with most force and power the master passion of the human breast. The middle aged, the elderly, the cautious, the worldly, the great mass, in short, of ordinary men, will regard it as a senseless rhapsody, French in its character, high-flown in its language, fit only to be laughed at by all persons of judgment. The greater part of the critics who have hitherto noticed this remarkable work in the daily press have belonged to the latter class, and treated it with unmeasured severity. But experience has taught us that *minorities are generally in the right* in the *first* estimation of books, and that the majority in the end generally comes round to their side; and although none are further removed than we are from the visions of Lamartine as to the perfectibility of human nature, we have an undoubting confidence in the buoyant tendency, in the long run, of works of an elevated and generous character, which this unquestionably is, how far soever it may be removed from the worldly feelings of a selfish age. As a specimen of the author's style, we translate the following passage, in which he recounts his parting walk, in the gardens of the park of Mousseaux, with the object of his attachment :—

"We consecrated to our farewells the day which preceded my departure.

We wished to bid each other adieu, not in the shade of walls which stifle the soul, or in the eyes of others who share not in the affections, but under the heavens, in the light of the sun, in solitude and silence. Nature associates itself to the finest sensations of the soul. She seems to understand, to sympathise with them, like an invisible confidant. She bears them to heaven, where they are received and rendered divine.

"That magnificent park, planted with aged elms, interspersed with meadows, watered with streams, spiritualised by monuments, columns, ruins, images of the past, anticipations of the future, had that day no other spectators save ourselves, but the insects and the birds. Alas! never were its verdant banks and beauteous leaves gazed on by more mournful eyes. The more that the sky was warm and resplendent—the more that the light and the shade deliciously combated on the grass in the breath of summer eve, like the shadow of a bird's wing which pursues another—the more that the nightingales warbled their melodious notes in the air—the more the waters reflected, in their polished mirror, the flocks of aquatic birds which floated on their surface—the more was that gaiety sad to us, and the more did the dazzling brilliancy of that summer evening contrast with the sombre cloud which weighed upon our hearts. In vain we strove to deceive ourselves by exclamations on the beauty of the scene, the lustre of the flowers, the perfume of the air, the depth of the shadows, the solitude of those sites where a world of love might have been shut up in ecstasy. We cast on these objects, from a mutual wish to distract our minds, a passing gaze; but our eyes soon sank upon the earth. Our voices even, while they re-echoed the vain sounds of joy and admiration, betrayed the void of words and the absence of our souls. They were far distant.

"In vain we seated ourselves alternately at the foot of perfumed lilac trees, under the shadow of lofty cedars, on the remains of columns, on the banks of the numberless waters which were scattered around, to pass the long hours of our last interview. Scarcely had we chosen one seat before a vague disquietude compelled us to rise and choose another. Here it was the shade, there the light; in one place the inopportune sound of a cascade, in another the ceaseless warbling of a nightingale over our heads, which rendered all that enjoyment sad, and all those beauties unsupportable. When the heart is sad in the breast, Nature herself is felt as oppressive—Eden itself would be a pain the more, if it was the scene of the separation of two lovers.

"At last, tired of wandering without finding a refuge from ourselves during an hour, we sat down near a little bridge over a stream, at a little distance from each other, as if the very sound of our respirations would have been felt as inopportune, or as if a secret instinct taught us to conceal mutually from each other the half-stifled sighs which escaped from our bosoms. We gazed for long in silence on the water reflecting the verdant banks. As we looked on the body of a young swallow, which had been drowned in attempting to drink in a marble basin above before its wings were sufficiently strong to sustain its weight, another swallow, doubtless its mother, flew backwards and forwards a hundred times under the arch, uttering piercing cries—we looked at each other in silence—our eyes met; we turned them aside and burst into tears. We tried sometimes to speak, but our hearts were full, and we could not. At length we gave way to nature, and continued to shed, during the short time we sat together, silent tears. The earth received them, the air carried them away, the rays of the sun dried them up, but they were numbered in Heaven. Not a drop of the cup of anguish remained untasted by us when we rose up, without speaking, without seeing each other through our overflowing eyes. Such were our adieus: a funeral image, an ocean of tears, an eternal silence. We separated at length *without looking at each other*, lest our firmness should melt away altogether under the intensity of such a gaze.

That garden, the last scene of our love and of our adieus, will never be effaced from my memory; but it shall never again feel the trace of my steps."—P. 348, 8vo edition.

Chateaubriand is more a man of the world than Lamartine. He has passed through a life of greater vicissitudes, and been much more frequently brought into contact with men in all ranks and gradations of society. He is not less chivalrous than Lamartine, but more practical; his style is less pictorial but more statesmanlike. The French of all shades of political opinion agree in placing him at the head of the writers of the last age. This high position, however, is owing rather to the detached passages than the general tenor of his writings, for their average style is hardly equal to such an encomium. He is not less vain than Lamartine, and still more egotistical—a defect which, as already noticed, he shares with nearly all the writers of autobiography in France, but which appears peculiarly extraordinary and lamentable in a man of such talents and acquirements. His life abounded with strange and romantic adventures, and its vicissitudes would have furnished a rich field for biography even to a writer of less imaginative powers.

He was born on the 4th September 1768—the same year with Napoleon—at an old melancholy chateau on the coast of Brittany, washed by the waves of the Atlantic ocean. His mother, like those of almost all other eminent men recorded in history, was a very remarkable woman, gifted with a prodigious memory and an ardent imagination—qualities which she transmitted in a very high degree to her son. His family was very ancient, going back to the year 1000; but, till illustrated by François René, who has rendered it immortal, the Chateaubriands lived in unobtrusive privacy on their paternal acres. After receiving the rudiments of education at home, he was sent at the age of seventeen into the army; but the Revolution having soon after broken out, and his regiment revolted, he quitted the service and came to Paris, where he witnessed the horrors of the storming of the Tuileries on the 10th of August, and the massacre in the prisons on 2d September. Many of his nearest relations—in particular his sister-in-law, Madame de Chateaubriand, and sister, Madame Rozambo—were executed along with Malesherbes, shortly before the fall of

Robespierre. Obliged now to fly to England, he lived for some years in London in extreme poverty, supporting himself by his pen. It was there he wrote his earliest and least creditable work, the *Essai Historique.* Tired of such an obscure and monotonous life, however, he set out for America, with the Quixotic design of discovering by land journey the North-west Passage. He failed in that attempt, for which, indeed, he had no adequate means; but he dined with Washington, and in the solitudes of the Far West imbibed many of the noblest ideas, and found the subjects of several of the finest descriptions, which have since adorned his works. Finding that there was nothing to be done in the way of discovery in America, he returned to England. Afterwards he went to Paris, and there composed his greatest works, *Atala et Réné* and the *Génie du Christianisme,* which soon acquired a colossal reputation, and raised the author to the highest pinnacle of literary fame.

Napoleon, whose piercing eye discerned talent wherever it was to be found, now selected him for the public service in the diplomatic line. He gives the following interesting account of the first and only interview he had with that extraordinary man, in the saloon of his brother Lucien :—

"I was in the gallery when Napoleon entered; his appearance struck me with an agreeable surprise. I had never previously seen him but at a distance. His smile was sweet and encouraging; his eye beautiful, especially from the way in which it was overshadowed by the eyebrows. He had no charlatanism in his looks, nothing affected or theatrical in his manner. The *Génie du Christianisme,* which at that time *was making a great deal of noise,* had produced its effect on Napoleon. A vivid imagination animated his cold policy; he would not have been what he was if the Muse had not been there; reason in him worked out the ideas of a poet. All great men are composed of two natures—for they must be at once capable of inspiration and action—the one conceives, the other executes.

"Buonaparte saw me, and knew me I know not how. When he moved towards me, it was not known whom he sought. The crowd opened; every one hoped the First Consul would stop to converse with him; his air showed that he was irritated at these mistakes. I retired behind those around me; Buonaparte suddenly raised his voice, and called out, "Monsieur de Chateaubriand." I then remained alone in front; for the crowd instantly retired, and re-formed in a circle around us. Buonaparte addressed me with simplicity, without questions, preamble, or compliments. He began speaking about Egypt and the Arabs, as if I had been his intimate friend, and he had only resumed a conversation already commenced betwixt us. 'I was always struck,' said he, 'when I saw the Sheiks fall on their knees in the Desert, turn towards the East, and touch the sand with their foreheads. What is that unknown thing which they adore in the East?' Speedily then passing to another idea, he said, 'Christianity! the *Idealogues* wished to reduce it to a system of astronomy! Suppose it were so, do they suppose they would

render Christianity little? Were Christianity only an allegory of the movement of the spheres, the geometry of the stars, the *esprits forts* would have little to say: despite themselves, they have left sufficient grandeur to *l'Infame*.'*

"Buonaparte immediately withdrew. Like Job in the night, I felt as if a spirit had passed before me; the hairs of my head stood up. I did not know its countenance; but I heard its voice like a little whisper.

"My days have been an uninterrupted succession of visions. Hell and heaven continually have opened under my feet, or over my head, without my having had time to sound their depths, or withstand their dazzling. I have met once, and once only, on the shores of the two worlds, the man of the last age, and the man of the new—Washington and Napoleon—I conversed a few moments with each—both sent me back to solitude—the first by a kind wish, the second by an execrable crime.

"I remarked that, in moving through the crowd, Buonaparte cast on me looks more steady and penetrating than he had done before he addressed me. I followed him with my eyes.

'Who is that great man who cares not
For conflagrations.'"†—Vol. iv. 118–121.

This passage conveys a just idea of Chateaubriand's Memoirs: his elevation of mind, his ardent imagination, his deplorable vanity. In justice to so eminent a man, however, we transcribe a passage in which the nobleness of his character appears in its true lustre, untarnished by the weaknesses which so often disfigure the character of men of genius. We allude to his courageous throwing down the gauntlet to Napoleon, on occasion of the murder of the Duke d'Enghien:—

"Two days before the fatal 20th March, I dressed myself before taking leave of Buonaparte, on my way to the Valais, to which I had received a diplomatic mission; I had not seen him since the time when he had spoken to me at the Tuileries. The gallery where the reception was going on was full; he was accompanied by Murat and his aide-de-camp. When he approached me, I was struck with an alteration in his countenance: his cheeks were fallen in, of a livid hue; his eyes stern; his colour pale; his air sombre and terrible. The attraction which had formerly drawn me towards him was at an end: instead of awaiting, I fled his approach. He cast a look towards me, as if he sought to recognise me, moved a few steps towards me, turned, and disappeared. Returned to the Hôtel de France, I said to several of my friends, 'Something strange, which I do not know, must have happened: Buonaparte could not have changed to such a degree unless he had been ill.' Two days after, at eleven in the forenoon, I heard a man cry in the streets, 'Sentence of the military commission convoked at Vincennes, which has condemned to the pain of Death Louis Antoine Henri de Bourbon, born 2d August 1772, at Chantilly.' That cry fell on me like a clap of thunder: it changed my life as it changed that of Napoleon. I returned home, and said to Madame de Chateaubriand—'The Duke d'Enghien has just been shot.' I sat down to a table and began to write my resignation—Madame de Chateaubriand made no opposition: she had a great deal of courage. She

* Alluding to the name *l'Infame*, given by the King of Prussia, d'Alembert, and Diderot, in their correspondences, to the Christian religion.

† *Dante.*

was fully aware of my danger: the trial of Moreau and Georges Cadoudal was going on: the lion had tasted blood: it was not the moment to irritate him."—Vol. iv. 228–229.

After this honourable step, which happily passed without leading to Chateaubriand's being shot, he travelled to the East, where he visited Greece, Constantinople, the Holy Land, and Egypt, and collected the materials which have formed two of his most celebrated works, *L'Itinéraire à Jerusalem*, and *Les Martyres*. He returned to France, but did not appear in public life till the Allies conquered Paris in 1814, when he composed with extraordinary rapidity his famous pamphlet entitled *Buonaparte and the Bourbons*, which had so powerful an effect in bringing about the Restoration. The Royalists were now in power, and Chateaubriand was too important a man to be overlooked. In 1821 he was sent as ambassador to London, the scene of his former penury and suffering; in 1823 he was made Minister of Foreign Affairs, and in that capacity projected, and successfully carried through, the expedition to Spain which reseated Ferdinand on the throne of his ancestors; and he was afterwards the plenipotentiary of France at the Congress of Verona in 1824. He was too liberal a man to be employed by the Administration of Charles X., but he exhibited an honourable constancy to misfortune on occasion of the Revolution of 1830. He was offered the portfolio of Foreign Affairs, if he would abstain from opposition; but he refused the proposal, made a last noble and eloquent speech in favour of his dethroned sovereign in the Chamber of Peers, resigned all his pensions and appointments, took his leave of the treacherous Senate, and, withdrawing into privacy, lived in retirement, engaged in literary pursuits, and in the composition or revising of his numerous publications, till his death, which occurred in June 1848.

Such a life of such a man cannot be other than interesting, for it unites the greatest possible range and variety of events with the reflections of a mind of great power, ardent imagination, and extensive erudition. His autobiography, or *Mémoires d'Outre Tombe*, as it is called, was accordingly looked for with great interest, which has not been sensibly diminished by the revolution of 1848, which has brought a new set of political actors on the stage. Four volumes only

have hitherto been published, but the rest may speedily be looked for, now that the military government of Prince Louis Napoleon has terminated that of anarchy in France, and permitted literary works, though in sorely diminished numbers, to reappear amongst them. The three first volumes certainly disappointed us: chiefly from the perpetual and offensive vanity which they exhibited, and the number of details, many of them of a puerile or trifling character, which they contained. The fourth volume, however, from which the preceding extracts have been taken, exhibits Chateaubriand, in many places, in his original vigour; and not less the noble and disinterested acts with which his public life terminated.

MICHELET'S FRANCE

[FOREIGN AND COLONIAL REVIEW, April 1844]

It is a common and very just observation, that modern historical works are not so interesting as those which have been bequeathed to us by antiquity. Even at this distance of time, after two thousand years have elapsed since they were written, the great histories of Greece and Rome still form the most attractive subject of study to all ages. The young find in their heart-stirring legends and romantic incidents, keen and intense delight; the middle-aged discover in their reflections and maxims the best guide in the ever-changing, but yet ever the same, course of human events; the aged recur to them with still greater pleasure, as embodying at once the visions of their youth and the experience of their maturer years. It is not going too far to assert, that in their own style they are altogether inimitable, and that, like the Greek statues, future ages, ever imitating, will never be able to rival them.

This remarkable and generally admitted perfection is not to be ascribed, however, to any superior genius in the ancient to the modern writers. History was a different art in Greece and Rome from what it now is. Antiquity had no romances—their histories, based in early times on their ballads and traditions, supplied their place. Narrative with them was simple in event, and single in interest—it related in general the progress of a single city or commonwealth; upon that the whole light of the artist required to be thrown: the remainder naturally was placed in shade, or slightly illuminated only where it came in contact with the favoured object. With the exception of Herodotus, who, though the oldest historian in existence, was led by

the vigour of his mind, his discursive habits, and extensive travelling, to give, as it were, a picture of the whole world then known—these ancient histories are all the annals of individual towns or little republics. Xenophon, Thucydides, Sallust, Livy, Diodorus Siculus, Dionysius Halicarnassensis, are all more or less of this character. The mighty genius of Tacitus alone seems to have embraced the design of giving a picture of the vast empire of Rome; and even in his hands history was still distinguished by its old character—the Forum was still the object of reverential interest—the Palatine Mount embraced the theatre of almost all the revolutions which he has so admirably portrayed; and his immortal work is less a picture of the Roman world under the Cæsars, than a delineation of the revolutions of the palace which shook their empire, and the convulsive throes by which they were attended throughout its various provinces.

In modern times, a far more difficult task awaits the historian, and wholly different qualities are required in him who undertakes to perform it. The superior age of the world—the eighteen hundred years which have elapsed since the Augustan age of Roman literature—the discovery of new nations, quarters of the globe, and hemispheres, since Livy concluded in one hundred and forty books the majestic annals of Roman victories—the close connexion of nations among each other, which have interlaced their story like the limbs of ancient wrestlers—the new sciences which have grown up and come to bear upon human events, with the growth of mankind and the expansion of knowledge—and the prodigious perplexity of transactions, military, political, and moral, which require to be unravelled and brought in a clear form before the mind of the reader—have rendered the task of the historian now as laborious, complicated, and confused, as in former times it was simple, clear, and undivided. Unity of effect—that precious and important object in all the Fine Arts—has been rendered always difficult, sometimes impossible. The story is so complicated, the transactions so various, the interests so diverse, that nothing but the most consummate skill, and incessant attention on the part of the historian to the leading objects of his narrative, can prevent the mind of the reader from being

lost in a boundless sea of detached occurrences. It is not the "tale of Troy divine," nor the narrative of Roman heroism, nor the conquest of Jerusalem, which requires to be recorded; but the transactions of many different nations, as various and detached from each other as the adventures of the knights-errant in Ariosto.

For these reasons history cannot be written now on the plan of the ancients,—and if attempted, it would fail of success. The family of nations has become too large to admit of interest being centred only on one member of it. It is in vain now to draw the picture of the groups of time, by throwing the whole light on one figure, and all the rest in shade. Equally impossible is it to give a mere narrative of interesting events, and cast all the rest overboard. All the world would revolt at such an attempt, if made. The transactions of the one selected would be unintelligible, if those of the adjoining states were not given. One set of readers would say, "Where are your statistics?" Another, "There is no military discussion—the author is evidently no soldier." A third would condemn the book as wanting diplomatic transactions; a fourth, as destitute of philosophic reflection. The statesman would throw it aside as not containing the information he desired; the scholar as affording no clue to contemporary and original authority; the man of the world, as a narrative not to be relied on, and to which it was hazardous to trust without farther investigation. Women would reject it as less interesting than novels; men, as not more authentic than a romance.

Notwithstanding, however, this great and increasing difficulty of writing history in modern times, from the vast addition to the subjects which it embraces and must embrace, the fundamental principles of the art are still the same as they were in the days of Thucydides or Sallust. The figures in the picture are greatly multiplied; many cross lights disturb the unity of its effect; infinitely more learning is required in the drapery and still life; but the object of the painter has undergone no change. Unity of effect, singleness of emotion, should still be his great aim: the multiplication of objects from which it is to be produced has increased the difficulty, but not altered the principles of the art. And that this difficulty is not insuperable, but

may be overcome by the light of genius directing the hand of industry, is decisively proved by the example of Gibbon's Rome, which, embracing the events of fifteen centuries, and successive descriptions of all the nations which, during that long period, took a prominent part in the transactions of the world, yet conveys a clear and distinct impression in every part to the mind of the reader; and presents a series of pictures so vivid, and drawn with such force, that the work, more permanently than any romance, fascinates every successive generation.

It is commonly said that accuracy and impartiality are the chief requisites in a historian. That they are indispensable to his utility or success is indeed certain; for if the impression once be lost that the author is to be relied on, the value of his production, as a record of past events, is at an end. No brilliancy of description, no magic of eloquence, no power of narrative, can supply the want of the one thing needful—*trustworthiness*. But fully admitting that truth and justice are the bases of history, there never was a greater mistake than to imagine that of themselves they will constitute a historian. They may make a valuable annalist—a good compiler of materials; but very different qualities are required in the artist who is to construct the edifice. In him we expect the power of combination, the inspiration of genius, the brilliancy of conception, the generalisation of effect. The workman who cuts the stones out of the quarry, or fashions and dresses them into entablatures and columns, is a very different man from him who combines them into the temple, the palace, or the cathedral. The one is a tradesman, the other an artist—the first a quarrier, the last a Michael Angelo.

Mr Fox arranged the arts of composition thus:—1. Poetry; 2. History; 3. Oratory. That very order indicated that the great orator had a just conception of the nature of history, and possessed many of the qualities requisite to excel in it, as he did in the flights of eloquence. It is, in truth, in its higher departments, one of the fine arts; and it is the extraordinary difficulty of finding a person who combines the imagination and fervour requisite for eminence in their aërial visions, with the industry and research which are indispensable for the correct narrative of earthly events,

which renders great historians so very rare, even in the most brilliant periods of human existence. Antiquity only produced six ; modern times can hardly boast of eight. It is much easier to find a great epic than a great history ; there were many poets in antiquity, but only one Tacitus. Homer himself is rather an annalist than a poet : it is his inimitable traits of nature which constitute his principal charm : the Iliad is a history in verse. Modern Italy can boast of a cluster of immortal poets and painters ; but the country of Raphael and Tasso has not produced one really great history. The laboured annals of Guicciardini or Davila cannot bear the name ; a work, the perusal of which was deemed worse than the fate of a galley-slave, cannot be admitted to take its place with the master-pieces of Italian art.* Three historians only in Great Britain have by common consent taken their station in the highest rank of historic excellence. Sismondi alone in France has been assigned a place by the side of Gibbon, Hume, and Robertson. This extraordinary rarity of the highest excellence demonstrates the extraordinary difficulty of the art, and justifies Mr Fox's assertion, that it ranks next to poetry in the fine arts ; but it becomes the more extraordinary, when the immense number of works written on historical subjects is taken into consideration, and the prodigious piles of books of history which are to be met with in every public library.

The greatest cause of this general failure of historical works to excite general attention, or acquire lasting fame, is the want of power of generalisation and classification in the writers. Immersed in a boundless sea of details, of the relative importance of which they were unable to form any just estimate, the authors of the vast majority of these works have faithfully chronicled the events which fell under their notice, but in so dry and uninteresting a manner that they produced no sort of impression on mankind. Except as books of antiquity or reference, they have long since been consigned to the vault of all the Capulets. They were crushed under their own weight—they were drowned in the flood of their own facts. While they were straining every nerve not

* It is reported in Italy, that a galley-slave was offered a commutation of his sentence, if he would read through Guicciardini's War of Florence with Pisa. After labouring at it for some time, he petitioned to be sent back to the oar—*Si non è vero è bene trôvato.*

to deceive their readers, the whole class of those readers quietly slipped over to the other side. They, their merits and their faults, were alike forgotten. It may safely be affirmed, that ninety-nine out of a hundred historical works are consigned to oblivion from this cause.

The quality, on the other hand, which distinguishes all the histories which have acquired a great and lasting reputation among men, has been the very reverse of this. It consists in the power of throwing into the shade the subordinate and comparatively immaterial facts, and bringing into a prominent light those only on which subsequent ages love to dwell, from the heroism of the actions recounted, the tragic interest of the catastrophes portrayed, or the important consequences with which they have been attended on the future generations of men. It was thus that Herodotus painted with so much force the memorable events of the Persian invasion of Greece ; and Thucydides, the contest of aristocracy and democracy in the Greek commonwealths ; and Livy, the immortal strife of Hannibal and Scipio in Roman story. No historian ever equalled Gibbon in this power of classification, and of giving breadth of effect ; for none ever had so vast and complicated a series of events to recount, and none ever portrayed them with so graphic and luminous a pen. Observe his great pictures :—the condition of the Roman empire in the time of Augustus—the capture of Constantinople by the Latin crusaders—the rise of Mahommed—the habits and manners of the pastoral nations—the disasters of Julian—and the final decay and ruin of the Eternal City. They stand out from the canvass with all the freshness and animation of real life ; and seizing powerfully on the imagination of the reader, they make an indelible impression, and compensate or cause to be forgotten all the insignificant details of revolutions in the palace of Constantinople, or in the decline of the Roman empire, which necessarily required to be introduced.

Struck with the fate of so prodigious a host of historical writers, who had sunk into oblivion from this cause, Voltaire, with his usual vigour and originality, struck out a new style in this department of literature. Discarding at once the whole meagre details, the long descriptions of dress and ceremony, which filled the pages of the old chronicles or

monkish annalists, he strove to bring history back to what he conceived, and with reason, was its true object—a striking delineation of the principal events which had occurred, with a picture of the changes of manners, ideas, and principles with which they were accompanied. This was a great improvement on the *jejune* narratives of former times; and proportionally great was the success with which, in the first instance at least, it was attended. While the dry details of Guicciardini, the ponderous tomes of Villaret or Mezeray, and the trustworthy quartos of De Thou, slumbered in respectable obscurity on the dusty shelves of the library, the "Siècle de Louis XIV.," the Life of Peter the Great and Charles XII., were on every table, and almost in every boudoir; and their popular author was elevated to the pinnacle of worldly fame, while his more laborious and industrious predecessors were nigh forgotten by a frivolous age. A host of imitators, as usual with every original writer, followed in this brilliant and lucrative path; of whom, Raynal in France, Schiller in Germany, and Watson in England, were the most successful.

But it was ere long discovered that this brilliant and *sketchy* style of history was neither satisfactory to the scholar nor permanently popular with the public. It was amusing rather than interesting, brilliant than profound. Its ingenious authors sprang too suddenly to conclusions—they laid down positions which the experience of the next age proved to be erroneous. It wanted that essential requisite in history, a knowledge of the human heart and a practical acquaintance with men. Above all, it had none of the earnestness of thought, the impassioned expression which springs from deep and sincere conviction, and which is ever found to be the only lasting passport to the human heart. After the first burst of popularity was over, it began to be discovered that these brilliant sketches were not real history, and could never supply its place. They left an immense deal untold, of equal or greater importance than what was told. They gave an amusing, but deceptive, and therefore not permanently interesting, account of the periods they embraced. Men desire something more in reading the narrative of great and important events in past times, than an able sketch of their leading features and brilliant charac-

ters, accompanied by perpetual sneers at priests, eulogies on kings, or sarcasms on mankind. This was more particularly the case when the political contests of the eighteenth century increased in vehemence, and men, warmed with the passions of real life, turned back to the indifferent coolness, the philosophic disdain, the *ton dérisoire*, with which the most momentous or tragic events had been treated in these gifted but superficial writers. Madame de Stael has said, that when derision has become the prevailing characteristic of the public mind, it is all over with the generous affections or elevated sentiments. She was right, but not for ever—only till men are made to feel in their own persons the sufferings they laugh at in others. It is astonishing how soon that turns derision into sympathy. The "*aristocrats dérisoires*" emerged from the prisons of Paris, on the fall of Robespierre, deeply affected with sympathy for human woe.

The profound emotions, the dreadful sufferings, the heart-stirring interest of that eventful era, speedily communicated themselves to the style of historical writers; it at once sent the whole tribe of philosophic and derisory historians overboard. The sketchy style, the philosophic contempt, the calm indifference, the sceptical sneers of Voltaire and his followers, were felt as insupportable by those who had known what real suffering was. There early appeared in the narratives of the French Revolution, accordingly, in the works of Toulongeon, Bertrand de Molleville, the Deux Amis de la Liberté, and Lacretelle, a force of painting, a pathos of narrative, a vehemence of language, which for centuries had been unknown in modern Europe. This style speedily became general, and communicated itself to history in all its branches. The passions on all sides were too strongly roused to permit of the calm narratives of former philosophic writers being tolerated; men had suffered too much to allow them to speak or think with indifference of the sufferings of others. In painting with force and energy, it was soon found that recourse must be had to the original authorities, and, if possible, the eye-witnesses of the events; all subsequent or imaginary narrative appeared insipid and lifeless in comparison; it was like studying the mannerist trees of Perella or Vivares after the vigorous sketches from nature of Salvator or Claude. Thence has arisen the great school

of modern French history, of which Sismondi was the founder ; and which has since been enriched by the works of Guizot, Thierry, Barante, Thiers, Mignet, Michaud, and Michelet : a cluster of writers which, if none of them singly equal the masterpieces of English history, presents, taken as a whole, a greater mass of talent in that department than any other country can boast.

The poetical mind and pictorial eye of Gibbon had made him anticipate, in the very midst of the philosophic school of Voltaire, Hume, and Robertson, this great change which misfortune and suffering impressed generally upon the next generation. Thence his extraordinary excellence and acknowledged superiority, as a delineator of events, to any writer who has preceded or followed him. He united the philosophy and general views of one age to the brilliant pictures and impassioned story of another. He warmed with the narratives of the Crusaders or the Saracens, he wandered with the Scythians, he wept with the Greeks, he delineated with a painter's hand and a poet's fire the manners of the nations, the features of the countries, the most striking events of the periods which were passed under review; but, at the same time, he preserved inviolate the unity and general effect of his picture : his lights and shadows maintained their just proportions, and were respectively cast on the proper objects. Philosophy threw a radiance over the mighty maze; and the mind of the reader, after concluding his prodigious series of details, dwelt with complacency on its most striking periods, skilfully brought out by the consummate skill of the artist, as the recollection of a spectator does on any of the magic scenes in Switzerland, in which, amidst an infinity of beautiful objects, the eye is fascinated by the calm tranquillity of the lake, or the rosy hues of the evening glow on the glacier. We speak of Gibbon as a delineator of events : none can feel more strongly, or deplore more deeply, the fatal blindness—the curse of his age—which rendered him so perverted on the subject of religion, and left so wide a chasm in his immortal work, which the profounder thought and wider experience of Guizot has done so much to fill.

Considered as calm and philosophic narratives, the histories of Hume and Robertson will remain as standard models

for every future age. The just and profound reflections of the former, the inimitable clearness and impartiality with which he has summed up the arguments on both sides, on the most momentous questions which have agitated England, as well as the general simplicity, uniform clearness, and occasional pathos of his story, must for ever command the admiration of mankind. In vain we are told that he is often inaccurate, sometimes partial; in vain are successive attacks published on detached parts of his narrative, by party zeal or antiquarian research: his reputation is undiminished: successive editions issuing from the press attest the continued sale of his work; and it continues its majestic course through the sea of time, like a mighty three-decker, which never even condescends to notice the javelins darted at its sides from the hostile canoes which from time to time seek to impede its progress.

Robertson's merits are of a different, and, upon the whole, of an inferior kind. Gifted with a philosophic spirit, a just and equal mind, an eloquent and impressive expression, he had not the profound sagacity, the penetrating intellect, which have rendered the observation of Bacon, Hume, and Johnson as enduring as the English language. He had not enjoyed the practical acquaintance with man which Hume acquired by mingling in diplomacy; and without a practical acquaintance with man, no writer, whatever his abilities may be, can rightly appreciate the motives or probable result of human actions. It was this practical collision with public affairs which has rendered the histories of Thucydides, Sallust, and Tacitus so profoundly descriptive of the human heart. Living alternately in the seclusion of a Scotch manse, or at the head of a Scotch university; surrounded by books, respect, and ease, the reverend Principal took an agreeable and attractive, but often incorrect view of human affairs. In surveying the general stream of human events, and drawing just conclusions regarding the changes of centuries, he was truly admirable; and in those respects his first volume of *Charles V.* may, if we except Guizot's *Civilisation Européenne*, be pronounced without a parallel in the whole annals of literature. The brilliant picture, too, which he has left of the discovery of America, and the manners of the savage tribes which then inhabited that continent, proves

that he was not less capable of wielding the fascination of description and romance. But in narrating political events, and diving into the mysteries of human motives, his want of practical acquaintance with man is at once apparent. He described the human heart from hearsay, not experience: he was a historian by reading, not observation. We look in vain in his pages for a gallery of historical portraits, to be placed beside the noble one which is to be found in Clarendon. As little can we find in them any profound remarks, like those of Bacon, Hume, or Tacitus, the justice of which is perpetually brought home by experience to every successive generation of men. His reputation, accordingly, is sensibly declining; and though it will never become extinct, it is easy to foresee that it is not destined to maintain, in future times, the colossal proportions which it at first acquired.

Both Hume and Robertson, however, left untouched one fertile field of historic interest, which Herodotus and Gibbon had cultivated with such success. This is the *geographical field*, the description of *countries* as well as men and manners. It is surprising what variety and interest this gives to historical narrative, how strongly it fixes places and regions in the memory of the reader, and how much it augments the interest of the story, by filling up and clothing in the mind's eye the scenes in which it occurred. Doubtless this must not be carried too far; unquestionably the narrative of human transactions is the main object of history, and the one thing needful, as in fiction, is to paint the human heart; but still there, as elsewhere in the Fine Arts, variety and contrast contribute powerfully to the effect; and amidst the incessant maze of villany and suffering which constitutes human transactions, it is sometimes refreshing to contemplate for awhile the calm serenity and indestructible features of Nature.

The modern French historians, forcibly struck with the insipidity and tameness of the philosophical histories, and fraught with the heart-rending recollections and fervent passions of the Revolution, have sought to give life and animation, as well as fidelity and accuracy to their works, by a sedulous recurrence to contemporary annals and authority, and an introduction of not only the facts and statements, but the ideas and words to be found in the ancient chronicles.

Hence the habitual recurrence to original authority, not only by reference at the foot of the page, but by quotation in the words of the old authors, of the actual expressions made use of on the more important occasions. There can be no doubt that this is in some respects an improvement, both with a view to the fidelity and accuracy of history; for it at once affords a guarantee for the actual examination of original authority by the writer, provides a ready and immediate check on inaccuracy or misrepresentation, and renders his work a *catalogue raisonné*, where those who desire to study the subject thoroughly, may discover at once where their materials are to be found. The works of both the Thierrys,* of Barante, Sismondi, and Michelet, are throughout constructed on this principle; and thence, in a great measure, the fidelity, spirit, and value of their productions.

But fully admitting, as we do, the importance of this great improvement in the art of historical composition, it has its limits; and writers who adopt it will do well to reflect on what those limits are. Though founded on fact, though based on reality, though dependent for its existence on truth, History is still one of the *Fine Arts*. We must ever recollect that Mr Fox assigned it a place next to Poetry, and before Oratory. All these improvements in the collection and preparation of materials add to the solidity and value of the structure, but they make no alteration in the principles of its composition. However the stones may be cut out of the quarry, however fashioned or carved by the skill of the workman, their united effect will be entirely lost if they are not put together by the conception of a Michael Angelo, a Palladio, or a Wren. Genius is still the soul of history; its highest inspirations must be derived from the Muses. The most valuable historical works, if not sustained by this divine quality, will speedily sink into useful quarries or serviceable books of reference. In vain does a Utilitarian age seek to discard the influence of imagination, and subject thought to the deductions of fact and reason, and the motives of temporal comfort. The value of fancy and ardour of mind, is more strongly felt in the narration of real,

* In the *Histoire de la Conquête de l'Angleterre par les Normands*, par AUGUSTE THIERRY; and the *Histoire des Gaulois*, and *Histoire des Rois Mérovingiens*, par AMÉDÉE THIERRY, (brother of Auguste.)

than even in the conception of fictitious events; for this reason, that it is more easy to discard uninteresting facts from a romance than render them interesting in history. They may be rejected altogether in the former; in the latter, they must be retained. It is easier to throw aside a burden than to contrive how to bear it. Induction may enable the author to sustain the weight, but it will never make his reader do so. Imagination alone can lighten the burden. It is the wings of Genius which must support Truth itself through the sea of Time. "Ces ouvrages ne sont pas que de l'imagination." "De l'Imagination!" replied Napoleon; "Hé bien! c'est l'Imagination qui domine le monde."

This eternal and indestructible superiority of genius to all the efforts of industry and intelligence, when unenlightened by its divine light, is not only noways inconsistent with the most minute acquaintance with facts, and sedulous attention to historic accuracy, but it can attain its highest flights only by being founded on that basis. Mere imagination and fancy will never supply the want of a faithful delineation of nature. The most inexperienced observer has no difficulty in distinguishing the one from the other. No great and universal reputation was ever gained, either in fiction, history, or the arts of imitation, but by a close and correct representation of reality. Romance rises to its highest flights, when it transports into the pages of the novelist the incidents, thoughts, and characters of real life. History assumes its most attractive garb when it clothes reality with the true but brilliant colours of romance. Look at the other arts. How did Homer and Shakspeare compose their immortal works? Not by conceiving ideal events and characters, the creation only of their own prolific imaginations, but by closely observing and describing nature, and by giving to their characters (albeit cast in the mould of fancy) those traits of reality which, being founded on the general and universal feelings of the human breast, have spoken with undiminished force to every succeeding age. How did Raphael and Claude elevate Painting to its highest and most divine conceptions, as well as its most exquisite and chastened finishing? By assiduously copying nature,—by drawing every limb, every feature, every branch, every sunset from real scenes, and peopling the world of their

brilliant imaginations, not with new creations, but with those objects and those images with which in reality all men were familiar. True, they moulded them into new combinations; true, they gave them an expression, or threw over them a light, more perfect than any human eye had yet witnessed; but that is precisely the task of genius, and it is in performing it that its highest excellence is attained. It is *by moulding reality into the expression of imagination* that the greatest triumphs of art are attained; and he who separates the one from the other will never rise to durable greatness in either.

We are the more inclined to insist on this eternal truth, as we perceive in the present style of historical composition, both in this country and on the Continent, unequivocal indications of a tendency to lose sight of the great end and aim of history, in the anxiety of attaining accuracy in its materials. Again and again we assert, that such accuracy is the indispensable basis of history; it *must* form its elements and characterise all its parts. But it will not of itself form a historian; it is to history what the sketches from nature in the *Liber Veritatis* are to the inimitable Claudes of the Doria Palace at Rome, or the National Gallery in London. Writers in this age have been so forcibly struck with the necessity of accuracy in their facts, and original drawing in their pictures, that they have gone into the opposite extreme; and the danger now is, not so much that they will substitute imagination for reality, or neglect original drawing in their pictures, as that, in their anxiety to preserve the fidelity of the sketches from which their pictures are taken, they will neglect the principles of their composition, and the great ends, moral, political, and religious, of their art.

This tendency is more particularly conspicuous in the Continental authors; but it is also very visible in several justly esteemed historical writers of our own country. If you take up any of the volumes of Thierry, Barante, Michaud, Sismondi, or Michelet, you will find the greater part of their pages filled with quotations from the old chronicles and contemporary annalists. In their anxiety to preserve accuracy of statement and fidelity in narrative, they have deemed it indispensable to give, on almost all occasions,

the very words of their original authorities. This is a very great mistake, and indeed so great a one that, if persevered in, it will speedily terminate that school of historical composition. It is impossible to make a harmonious whole by a selection of passages out of a vast mass of original writers of various styles and degrees of merit, and running, perhaps, over a course of centuries. It would be just as likely that you could make a perfect picture by dovetailing together bits of mosaic, dug up from the ruins of ancient Rome; or an impressive temple, by piling, on the top of each other, the columns, entablatures, and architraves of successive structures, raised during a course of many centuries. Every composition in the fine arts, to produce a powerful impression, and attain a lasting success, must have that *unity of expression* which, equally as in poetry and the drama, is indispensable to the production of emotion or delight in the mind of the person to whom it is addressed; and unity of expression is to be attained equally in ten thousand pages, and by recording ten thousand facts, as in an epic of Milton, a picture of Claude's, or a drama of Sophocles.

Sharon Turner, Lingard, Tytler, and Hallam are most able writers, indefatigable in the collection of facts, acute in the analysis of authorities, luminous in the deductions they have drawn from them. Immense is the addition which their labours have made to the real and correct annals of the British empire. But though many of their episodes are most captivating, and parts of their works must entrance every reader, there is no concealing the fact, that their pages are often deficient in interest, and are far from possessing the attraction which might have been expected from subjects of such varied and heart-stirring incident, treated by writers of such power of composition and learned acquirements. The reason is, that they have not regarded history as one of the fine arts; they have not studied unity of effect, or harmony of composition; they have forgot the place assigned it by Fox—next to poetry in the arts of composition. In the search of accuracy they have sometimes injured effect; in the desire to give original words, they have often lost originality of thought. Their pages are invaluable to the annalist; and, as books of reference or of value to scholars, they will always maintain a high place in our litera-

ture ; but they will not render hopeless, like Livy, Tacitus, or Gibbon, future histories on the subjects they have treated. From the facts they have brought to light, a future historian will be able to give a correct detail of British story, which, if clothed in the garb of imagination, may attain durable celebrity, and may possibly come in the end to rival the simpler, but less truthful narrative of Hume, in popularity and interest.

Colonel Napier's descriptions of battles, and the heart-stirring events of military warfare, are superior to anything in the same style, not only in modern, but almost in ancient history. His accounts of the battles of Albuera and Salamanca, of the sieges of Badajos and San Sebastian, of the actions in the Pyrenees, and of the struggle of Toulouse, possess a heart-stirring interest, a force and energy of drawing, which could have been attained only by the eye of genius animated by the reminiscences of reality. But the great defect of his brilliant work is the want of calmness in the judgment of political events, and undue crowding in the details of his work. He is far too minute in the account of inconsiderable transactions. He throws the light too equally upon all the figures in his canvass ; the same fault which characterises the home scenes of Wilkie, and will render them with equal, perhaps superior genius, inferior in lasting effect to the paintings of Teniers or Gerard Dow. So prodigious is the accumulation of detached facts which he describes, that the most enthusiastic admirer of military narrative is speedily satiated, and ordinary readers find their minds so confused by the events passed under review, that, with the exception of a few brilliant actions and sieges, they often close the work without any distinct idea of the events which it has so admirably recorded.

This defect is equally conspicuous in the pages of M. Michelet. That he is a man not merely of extensive and varied reading, but of fine genius and original thought, is at once apparent. He states in his preface, and the perusal of his work amply justifies the assertion, "that the most rigid criticism must concede to him the merit of having drawn his narrative entirely from original sources." But it were to be wished that, amidst this anxious care for the collection of materials, and the impressing of a faithful and original character

upon his work, he had been equally attentive to the great *art* of history—viz., the massing objects properly together, keeping them in the due subordination and perspective which their relative importance demands, and conveying a distinct impression to the reader's mind of the great eras and changes which the varied story of his subject presents. Want of attention to this has wellnigh rendered all the rest of no avail. To the learned reader, who is previously familiar with the principal events he describes, his narrative may convey something like a definite idea of the thread of events: but how many are these compared to the great mass of readers? Perhaps one in a hundred in France—one in five hundred in all other countries. The great bulk of readers may shut his last volume after the most careful perusal, without retaining any distinct recollection of the course of French History, or any remembrance at all of anything but a few highly wrought up and interesting passages. This is the great defect of the work, arising from want of attention to the due proportion of objects, and not throwing subordinate ones sufficiently into the shade. The same grievous mistake is conspicuous in Mackintosh, Lingard, and Turner's histories of England. It is the great danger of the new or graphic school of history; and unless care be taken to guard against it, the whole productions of that school will be consigned by future ages to oblivion.

We cannot admit that the magnitude or intricacy of a subject affords any excuse whatever for this defect. Livy did not fall into it in recording seven centuries of Roman victories; Gibbon did not fall into it in spanning the dark gulf which separates ancient from modern times. Claude produced one uniform impression out of an infinity of details,—in some of his pieces solitary and rural, in others crowded with harbours, shipping, and figures. Gaspar Poussin finished, with scrupulous accuracy, every leaf in his forest scenes; but he managed the light and the shade with such exquisite skill, that the charm of general effect is produced on the spectator's mind. Virgil produces one uniform impression from the homely details of his *Georgics*, equally as the complicated events of the *Æneid*. Amidst an infinity of details and episodes, Tasso has, with consummate skill, preserved unity of emotion in his *Jerusalem Delivered*.

Milton has not lost it even in recording the events of heaven and earth. Look at Nature; every leaf, every pebble, every cliff, every blade of grass, in the most extensive scene is finished with that perfection that characterises all her works; yet what majesty and generality of effect in the mighty whole! That is the model of historical composition: every object should be worked out, nothing omitted, nothing carelessly touched; but a bright light should be thrown only on the brilliant events, the momentous changes; whole generations and centuries of monotonous events cast into the shade, that is, slightly and rapidly passed over; and the most sedulous care taken to classify events into periods, in such a way as to form so many cells, as it were, in the memory of the reader, wherein to deposit the store of information afforded in regard to each.

There is, in truth, only one really great style in history, as there is in poetry, painting, or music. Superficial observers speak of a new school of history, or a new mode of treating human affairs, as they would of a new plant or a new opera: they might as well speak of a new style in sculpture or painting, in mathematics or astronomy, in epic or dramatic poetry. We should like to see any one who would improve on the style of Phidias and Raphael, of Homer and Virgil, of Tasso and Milton, of Sophocles or Racine. In inferior styles, indeed, there is a very great variety in this, as there is in all the other Fine Arts; but in the highest walks there is but one. The principles of the whole are the same; and those principles are to produce *generality of effect out of specialty of objects;* to unite fidelity of drawing with brilliancy of imagination. Observe with what exquisite skill Tasso works this uniform impression out of the varied events of his *Jerusalem Delivered;* therein lies his vast superiority to the endless adventures of the more brilliant and imaginative Ariosto. The principles which regulated the composition of the *Prometheus Vinctus* of Æschylus and the *Hamlet* of Shakspeare are the same: the Odes of Pindar are the counterparts of those of Gray; the sculpture of Phidias and the painting of Raphael are nothing but the same mind working with different materials. The composition of Gibbon is directed by exactly the same principles as the sunsets of Claude; the battle-pieces of

Napier and the banditti of Salvator are fac-similes of each other; the episodes of Livy and the *Good Shepherds* of Murillo produce the same emotions in the breast. Superficial readers will deride these observations, and ask, what has painting external objects to do with the narration of human events? We would recommend them to spend twenty years in the study of either, and they will be at no loss to discover in what their analogy consists.

On this account, we cannot admit that history is necessarily drier or less interesting than poetry or romance. True, it must give a faithful record of events; true, unless it does so, it loses its peculiar and highest usefulness; but are we to be told that reality is less attractive than fiction? Are feigned distresses less poignant than real ones—imaginary virtues less ennobling than actual? The advantage of fiction consists *in the narrower compass which it embraces*, and, consequently, the superior interest which it can communicate by working up the characters, events, and scenes. That, doubtless, is a great advantage; but is it beyond the reach of history? May not the leading characters and events there be delineated with the same force, brilliancy, and fidelity to nature? Has it not the additional source of interest arising from the events being real?—an interest which all who tell stories to children will see exemplified in their constant question, "Is it *true?*" None can see more strongly than we do, that the highest aim and first duty of history is not to amuse, but to instruct the world: and that mere amusement or interest are of very secondary importance. But is amusement irreconcilable with instruction—interest with elevation? Is not truth best conveyed when it is clothed in an attractive garb? Is not the greatest danger which it runs that of being superseded by attractive fiction? How many readers are familiar with English history through Shakspeare and Scott, rather than Hume and Lingard! That illustrates the risk of leaving truth to its unadorned resources. Was it not in parables that Supreme Wisdom communicated itself to mankind? The wise man will never disdain the aid even of imagination and fancy in communicating instruction. Recollect the words of Napoleon—"C'est l'imagination qui domine le monde."

We have been insensibly led into these remarks by

observing in what manner Sismondi, Thierry, Barante, Michelet, and indeed all the writers of the antiquarian and graphic school, have treated the history of France. They are all men of powerful talent, brilliant imagination, unbounded research, and philosophic minds: their histories are so superior to any which preceded them, that, in reading them, we appear to be entering upon a new and hitherto unknown world. But it is in the very richness of their materials—the extent of their learning—the vast stores of original ideas and authority they have brought to bear on the annals of the monarchy of Clovis—that we discern the principal defect of their compositions. They have been wellnigh overwhelmed by the treasures which they themselves have dug up. So vast is the mass of original documents which they have consulted—of details and facts which they have brought to light—that they have too often lost sight of the first rule in the art of history—unity of composition. They have forgotten the necessity of a distinct separation of events in such a manner as to impress the general course of time upon the mind of their readers. They are accurate, graphic, minute in details; but the *tout ensemble* is too often forgotten, and the Temple of History made up rather of a chaos of old marbles dug up from the earth, and piled on each other without either order or symmetry, than of the majestic proportions and colossal masses of the Pantheon or St Peter's.

The annals of no country are more distinctly separated into periods than those of France: in none has the course of events more clearly pointed out certain resting-places, at which the historian may pause to show the progress of civilisation and the growth of the nation. The first origin of the Gauls, and their social organisation, before the conquest of the Romans—their institutions under those mighty conquerors, and the vast impress which their wisdom and experience, not less than their oppression and despotism, communicated to their character and habits—the causes which led to the decay of the empire of the Cæsars, and let in the barbarians as deliverers rather than enemies into its vast provinces—the establishment of the monarchy of Clovis by these rude conquerors, and its gradual extension from the Rhine to the Pyrenees—the

decay of the Merovingian dynasty, and the prostration of government under the *Rois Fainéants*—the rise of the *Maires du Palais*, and their final establishment on the throne by the genius of Charlemagne—the rapid fall of his successors, and the origin of the Bourbon dynasty, contemporary with the Plantagenets of England—the crusades, with their vast effects, moral, social, and political, on the people and institutions of the country, and the balance of power among the different classes of society—the expulsion of the English by the ability of Philip Augustus, and the restoration of one monarchy over the whole of France—the frightful atrocities of the religious war against the Albigeois —the dreadful wars with England, which lasted one hundred and twenty years, from Edward III. to Henry V., with their immediate effect, analogous to that of the Wars of the Roses on this side of the Channel, in destroying the feudal powers of the nobility—the consequent augmentation of the power of the crown by the standing army of Charles VII.—the indefatigable activity and state policy of Louis XI.—the brilliant but ephemeral conquest of Italy by the rise and progress of Charles IX.—the rivalry of Francis I. and Charles V.—the religious wars, with their desolating present effects, and lasting ultimate consequences—the deep and Machiavelian policy of Cardinal Richelieu, and its entire success in concentrating the whole influence and power of Government in Paris—the brilliant era of Louis XIV., with its Augustan halo, early conquests, and ultimate disasters — the corruptions of the Regent Orleans and Louis XV. — the virtues, difficulties, and martyrdom of Louis XVI.—the commencement of the era of Revolutions, ending in the fanaticism of Robespierre and the carnage of the Empire—form a series of events and periods, stretching through the long course of eighteen centuries, and bringing down the annals of mankind from the Druids of Gaul and woods of Germany, to the intellect of Laplace and the glories of Napoleon.

To exhibit such a picture to the mind's eye in its just colours, due proportions, and real light—to trace so long a history fraught with such changes, glories, and disasters— to unfold, through so vast a progress, the unceasing development of the human mind, and simultaneously with it the

constant punishment of human iniquity,—is indeed a task worthy of the greatest intellect which the Almighty has ever vouchsafed to guide and enlighten mankind. It will never be adequately performed but by *one mind:* there is a unity which must pervade every great work of history, as of all the other Fine Arts; a succession of different hands breaks the thread of thought and mars the uniformity of effect as much in recording the annals of centuries, as in painting the passions of the heart, or the beauties of a single scene in nature. That it is not hopeless to look for such a mind is evident to all who recollect how Gibbon has painted the still wider expanse, and traced the longer story, of *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire:* but how often in a century does a Gibbon appear in the world!

In the outset of this noble task, Michelet has displayed very great ability; and the defects, as it appears to us, of his work, as it proceeds, strikingly illustrate the dangers to which the modern and graphic style of history is exposed. He is admirable, equally with Sismondi, Thierry, and Guizot, in the description of the condition of Gaul under the Romans, and the causes which paralysed the strength, and at length overthrew the power, of the empire of the Cæsars. With a discriminating eye and a master's hand, he has drawn the different character of the Celtic and German races of mankind, and the indelible impress which they have severally communicated to their descendants. The early settlement of the German tribes in Gaul, and the amalgamation of the victorious savage with the vanquished civilised race, is drawn in the spirit of a philosopher, and with a graphic power. If he had continued the work as it was thus begun, it would have left nothing to be desired.

But when he comes down to later times, and, above all, when he becomes involved in the endless maze and minute details of the Chronicles and early French Memoirs, the work assumes a different character. Though you still, in occasional expressions, see the reflections of the philosopher—in frequent pictures, the eye of the painter—yet the narrative in general is flooded by an ocean of details. Fatigued with the endless maze of intrigues, wars, tumults, tortures, crusades, and crimes, which succeed one another in rapid

succession, the reader in despair shuts the volume, with hardly any recollection of the thread of events. He recollects only that almost all the kings appear to have been wicked, almost all the nobles ambitious, almost all the priests cruel, almost all the people ferocious. There is nothing which tends so strongly to make us satisfied with our own lot, and inclined to return thanks to Heaven for having cast it in our age, as the study of the crimes, disasters, and sufferings of those which have preceded it.

But still "the mighty maze is not without a plan." In the midst of these hideous crimes and atrocities, of this general anguish and suffering, fixed laws were operating, a silent progress was going forward, and Providence was patiently and in silence working out its ultimate designs by the free agency of an infinity of separate individuals. A great system of moral retribution was unceasingly at work; and out of the mingled virtues and vices, joys and sorrows, crimes and punishment, of previous centuries, were slowly forming the elements of the great and glorious French monarchy. It is in the development of this magnificent progress, and in the power of exhibiting it in lucid colours to the eye of the spectator, that Michelet is chiefly deficient in his later volumes. This seems at first sight inexplicable, as in the early ones, relating to Gaul under the Romans, the settlement of the Franks, and the early kings of the Merovingian race, his powers of generalisation and philosophic observation are eminently conspicuous. They form, accordingly, by much the most interesting and instructive part of his history. But a closer examination will at once unfold the cause of this difference, and point to the chief changes of the graphic and antiquarian school of history. He generalised in the earlier volumes, because his materials were scanty; he has not done so in the later ones, because they were redundant. In the first instance, he saw objects at a distance in their just proportions; and, not being distracted with details, he threw broad lights and shadows over their great features; in the last, the objects were so near the eye, and the lights so perplexed and frequent, that he has in some degree lost sight of all general effect in his composition, or at least failed in conveying any lucid impression to the reader's mind.

In common with all later writers who have observed much or thought deeply on human affairs, M. Michelet is a firm believer in the inherent and indelible influence of *race*, both on the character and destiny of nations. His observations on this subject, especially on the peculiarities of the Celtic race, and their vital difference from the German, form one of the most interesting and valuable parts of his work. He traces the same character through the Scotch Highlanders, the mountaineers of Cumberland and Wales, the native Irish, the inhabitants of Brittany, and the mountaineers of Gascony and Béarn. On the other hand, the same national characteristics may be observed in the German race, under whatever climate and circumstances; in Saxony as in England; in the Swiss mountains as in the Dutch marshes; in the crowded marts of Flanders as in the solitude of the American forest. Of the inherent character of the Celtic race, he gives the following animated description :—

" The mixed races of Celts who are called French, can be rightly understood only by a study of the pure Celts, the Bretons and Welsh, the Scotch Highlanders and Irish peasants. While France, undergoing the yoke of repeated invasion, is marching through successive ages from slavery to freedom, from disgrace to glory, the old Celtic races, perched on their native mountains, or sequestered in their far distant isles, have remained faithful to the poetic independence of their barbarous life, till surprised by the rude hand of foreign conquest. It was in this state that England surprised, overwhelmed them;—vainly, however, has the Anglo-Saxon pressed upon them—they repel his efforts as the rocks of Brittany or Cornwall the surges of the Atlantic. The sad and patient Judea, which numbered its ages by its servitude, has not been more sternly driven from Asia. But such is the tenacity of the Celtic race, such the principle of life in nations, that they have endured every outrage, and still preserve inviolate the manners and customs of their forefathers. Race of granite! Immovable, like the huge Druidical blocks which they still regard with superstitious veneration.

" One might have expected that a race which remained for ever the same, while all was changing around it, would succeed in the end in conquering by the mere inert force of resistance, and would impress its character on the world. The very reverse has happened,—the more the race has been isolated, the more it has fallen into insignificance. To remain original, to resist all foreign intermixture, to repel all the ideas or improvements of the stranger, is to remain weak and isolated in the world. There is the secret of the Celtic race—there is the key to their whole history. It has never had but one idea—it has communicated that to no other nations, but it has received none from them. From age to age it has remained strong but limited, indestructible but humiliated, the enemy of the human race, and its eternal stain. Woful obstinacy of individuality, which proudly rests on itself alone, and repels all community with the rest of the world.

" The genius of the Celts, and above all of the Gauls, is vigorous and

fruitful, strongly inclined to material enjoyments, to pleasure and sensuality. The pleasures of sex have ever exercised a powerful influence over them. They are still the most prolific of the human race. In France, the *Vert Galant* is the true national king. We know how marvellously the native Irish have multiplied and overflowed all the adjoining states. It was a common occurrence in Brittany, during the middle ages, for a seigneur to have a dozen wives. *They constantly praised themselves*, and sent forth their sons fearless to battle. Universally, among the Celtic nations, bastards succeeded even among kings, as chief of the clan. Woman, the object of desire, the mere sport of voluptuousness, never attained the dignified rank assigned to her among nations of the German descent.

"No people recorded in history have resisted so stubbornly as the Celts. The Saxons were conquered by the Normans in a single battle; but Cambria contended two hundred years with the stranger. Their hopes sustain them after their independence is lost: an unconquerable will is the character of their race. While awaiting the day of its resurrection, it alternately sings and weeps: its chants are mingled with tears, as those of the Jews, when by the waters of Babylon they sat down and wept. The few fragments of Ossian which can really be relied on as ancient, have a melancholy character. Even our Bretons, though they have less reason to lament than the rest of their race, are sad and mournful in their ideas; their sympathy is with the Night, with Sorrow, with Death. 'I never sleep,' says a Breton proverb, 'but I die a bitter death.' To him who walks over a tomb they say, 'Withdraw from my domain.' They have little reason to be gay; all has conspired against them: Brittany and Scotland have attached themselves to the weaker side, to causes which were lost. The power of choosing its monarchs has been taken from the Celtic race since the mysterious stone, formerly brought from Ireland into Scotland, has been transported to Westminster.

"Ireland! Poor first-born of the Celtic race! So far from France, yet its sister, whom it cannot succour across the waves! The Isle of Saints—the Emerald Isle—so fruitful in men, so bright in genius!—the country of Berkeley and Toland, of Moore and O'Connell!—the land of bright thought and the rapid sword, which preserves, amidst the old age of this world, its poetic inspiration. Let the English smile when, in passing some hovel in their towns, they hear the Irish widow chant the coronach for her husband. Weep! mournful country; and let France too weep, for degradaton which she cannot prevent—calamities which she cannot avert! In vain have four hundred thousand Irishmen perished in the service of France. The Scotch Highlanders will ere long disappear from the face of the earth; the mountains are daily depopulating; the great estates have ruined the land of the Gaul as they did ancient Italy. The Highlander will ere long exist only in the romances of Walter Scott. The tartan and the claymore excite surprise in the streets of Edinburgh: they disappear—they emigrate; their national airs will ere long be lost, as the music of the Eolian harp when the winds are hushed.

"Behind the Celtic world, the old red granite of the European formation, has arisen a new world, with different passions, desires, and destinies. Last of the savage races which overflowed Europe, the Germans were the first to introduce the spirit of independence; the thirst for *individual* freedom. That bold and youthful spirit—that youth of man, who feels himself strong and free in the world which he appropriates to himself in anticipation—in forests of which he knows not the bounds—on a sea which wafts him to unknown shores—that spring of the unbroken horse which bears him to the Steppes and the Pampas—all worked in Alaric, when he swore that an unknown force impelled him to the gates of Rome; they impelled the Danish pirate when he rode on the stormy billow; they animated the Saxon outlaws, when under Robin Hood they contended for the laws of

Edward the Confessor against the Norman barons. That spirit of personal freedom, of unbounded individual pride, shines in all their writings—it is the invariable characteristic of the German theology and philosophy. From the day when, according to the beautiful German fable, the '*Wargus*' scattered the dust on all his relations, and threw the grass over his shoulder, and, resting on his staff, overleapt the frail paternal enclosure, and let his plume float to the wind—from that moment he aspired to the empire of the world. He deliberated with Attila whether he should overthrow the empire of the East or West; he aspired with England to overspread the western and southern hemispheres.

"It is from this mingled spirit of poetry and adventure, that the whole idealism of the Germans has taken its rise. In their robust race is combined the heroic spirit and the wandering instinct—they unite alone the 'Iliad' and 'Odyssey' of modern times—gold and women were the objects of their early expeditions; but these objects had nothing sensual or degrading in them. Woman was the companion, the support of man; his counsel in difficulty, his guardian angel in war. Her graces, her charms, consisted in her courage, her constancy. Educated by a man—by a warrior—the virgin was early accustomed to the use of arms—'Gothorum gens perfida, sed pudica; Saxones crudelitate efferi, sed castitate mirandi.' Woman in primitive Germany was bent to the earth beneath the weight of agricultural labour; but she became great in the dangers of war—the companion and partner of man, she shared his fate, and lightened his sorrows. 'Sic vivendum, sic pereundum,' says Tacitus. She withdrew not from the field of battle—she faced its horrors—she turned not aside from its blood. She was the Goddess of War—the charming and terrible spirit which at once animated its spirit, and rewarded its dangers—which inspired the fury of the charge, and soothed the last moments of the dying warrior. She was to be seen on the field of blood, as Edith the swan-necked sought the body of Harold after the defeat of Hastings, or the young Englishwoman, who, to find her lost husband, turned over the dead on the field of Waterloo."—Vol. i. p. 150, 175.

"O si sic omnia!" The mind is rendered dizzy; it turns round as on the edge of a precipice by the reflections arising out of this animated picture. In truth may it be said that these observations demolish at one blow the whole revolutionary theories of later times—they have turned the streams of French philosophy by their source. It was the cardinal point, the leading principle of the whole political speculation of the last half of the eighteenth century, that institutions were everything, character nothing; that man was moulded entirely by the government or religion to which he was subjected; and that there was no essential difference in the disposition of the different races which had overspread the earth. The first half of the nineteenth century was spent in the practical application of this principle. The French Jacobins conceived themselves adequate to forge constitutions for the whole world, and sent forth their armies of starving republicans to force them at the point of the bayonet on all mankind. Less vehement in their constitu-

tional propagandism, the English have been more persevering, and incomparably more pernicious. Their example allured, as much as the horrors of the Revolution repelled, mankind. The ardent, the generous, the philanthropic, everywhere sighed for the establishment of a government which should give them at once the energy of the British character, the glories of the British empire. And what has been the result? The desolation of Spain, the ruin of Portugal, the depopulation and blasting of South America. Vain have been all attempts to transplant to nations of Celtic or Moorish descent the institutions which grew and flourished among those of Anglo-Saxon blood. The ruin of the West India Islands proves their inapplicability to those of Negro extraction;—the everlasting distraction of Ireland, to those of unmixed Celtic blood. A century of bloodshed, devastation, and wretchedness will be spent ere mankind generally learn that there is an essential and indelible distinction of character between the different races of men; and, in Montesquieu's words, that "no nation ever attained to durable greatness but by institutions in harmony with its spirit."

Nor is there any foundation for the common observation, that this presents a melancholy view of human affairs; and that it is repugnant to our ideas of the beneficence of an overruling Providence to suppose that all nations are not adapted for the same elevating institutions. Are all nations blessed with the same climate, or soil, or productions? Will the vine and the olive flourish on every slope—the maize or the wheat on every plain? No. Every country has its own productions, riches, and advantages; and the true wisdom of each is found to consist in cultivating the fruits, or developing the riches, which Nature has bestowed. It is the same in the moral world. All nations were not framed in the same mould, because all were not destined for the same ends. To some was given, for the mysterious but beneficent designs of Providence, excellence in arms, and the ensanguined glory of ruthless conquest; to others supremacy in commerce, and the mission of planting their colonies in distant lands; to a few excellence in literature and the arts, and the more durable dominion over the thoughts and minds of men. What sort of a world would it be if all

nations were sanguinary and barbarous like the Tartars—or meek and patient like the Hindoos? If they all had the thirst for conquest of the Grand Army—or the rage for transplanting their institutions like the English? We boast, and in some respects with reason, of our greatness, our power, our civilisation. Is there any man amongst us who would wish to see that civilisation universal, with its accompaniments of nearly a seventh* of the whole population of the empire paupers;—of Chartists, Socialists, Repealers, Anti-Corn-Law Leaguers, and landed selfishness?

As a specimen of Michelet's powers of description, we extract his account of the battle of Azincour:—

"The two armies presented a strange contrast. On the side of the French were three enormous squadrons, three forests of lances, who formed in the narrow plain, and drew up as they successively emerged from the defiles in their rear. In front were the Constables, the Princes, the Dukes of Orleans, Bar, and Alençon, the Counts of Nevers, D'Eu, Richemont, and Vendome, amidst a crowd of barons, dazzling in gold and steel, with their banners floating in the air, their horses covered with scales of armour. The French had archers also, but composed of the commons only; the haughty seigneurs would not give them a place in their proud array. Every place was fixed; no one would surrender his own; the plebeians would have been a stain on that noble assembly. They had cannons also, but made no use of them: probably no one would surrender his place to them.

"The English army was less brilliant in appearance. The archers, 10,000 in number, had no armour, often no shoes; they were rudely equipped with boiled skins, tied with osier wands, and strengthened by a bar of iron on their feet. Their hatchets and axes suspended from their girdles gave them the appearance of carpenters. They all drew the bow with the *left* arm—those of France with the right. Many of these sturdy workmen had stript to the shirt, to be the more at ease—first, in drawing the bow, and at last in wielding the hatchet, when they issued from their hedge of stakes to hew away at those immovable masses of horses."

"It is an extraordinary but well authenticated fact, that the French army was so closely wedged together, and in great part so stuck in the mud, that they could neither charge nor retreat; but just stood still to be cut to pieces. At the decisive moment, when the old Thomas of Erpingham arranged the English army, he threw his staff in the air, exclaiming, 'Now strike!' The shout of ten thousand voices was raised at once; but to their great surprise, the French army stood still. Men and horses seemed alike enchained or dead in their armour. In truth, these weighty war-horses, oppressed with the load of their armour and riders, were unable to move. *The French were thirty-two deep—the English only four.*† That enormous depth rendered the great bulk of the French army wholly useless. The front ranks alone combated, and they were all killed. The remainder, unable either to advance or retreat, served only as a vast target to the unerring English arrows, which never ceased to rain down on the deep array. On the other hand, every Englishman wielded either his lance, his bow, or his hatchet, with effect. So

* Viz.—1,446,000 in England and Wales; 76,000 in Scotland; and 2,000,000 in Ireland. In all, 3,522,000, out of 27,000,000.—*Census of* 1841.

† This formation was the same on both sides, when Napoleon's Imperial Guard attacked the British Guards at Waterloo.

thick was the storm of arrows which issued from the English stakes, that the French horsemen bent their heads to their saddle-bows, to avoid being pierced through their visors. Twelve hundred horse, impatient of the discharge, broke from the flanks, and charged. Hardly a tenth part reached the stakes, where they were pierced through, and soon fell beneath the English axes. Then those terrible archers issued from their palisade, and hewed to pieces the confused mass of wounded horses, dismounted men, and furious steeds, which, galled by the incessant discharge of arrows, was now turmoiling in the bloody mud in which the chivalry of France was engulfed."—Vol. iv. p. 307, 311.

We take leave of M. Michelet, at least for the present, as his work is only half finished, with admiration for his genius, respect for his erudition, and gratitude for the service he has rendered to history; but we cannot place him in the first rank of historians. He wants the art of massing objects and the spirit of general observation. His philosophy consists rather in drawing visions of the sequence of events, or speculations on an inevitable progress in human affairs, than an enlightened and manly recognition of a Supreme superintendence. He unites two singularly opposite sets of principles—a romantic admiration for the olden time, though with a full and just appreciation of its evils, with a devout belief in the advent of a perfect state of society, the true efflorescence of the nation, in the equality produced by the Revolution. Yet is his work a great addition to European literature, and the writers of England would do well to look to their laurels, if they wish, against the able phalanx now arising on the other side of the Channel, to maintain the ancient place of their country in historic literature.

THE FALL OF ROME

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THE Rise and Fall of the Roman empire is by far the most remarkable and memorable event which has occurred in the whole history of mankind. It is hard to say whether the former or the latter is most worthy of profound study and anxious examination. The former has hitherto most strongly attracted the attention of men, from the extraordinary spectacle it exhibited of human fortitude triumphing over every obstacle, and human perseverance at length attaining universal dominion. It was the spectacle most likely to rivet the attention of strenuous and growing nations—of men in that stage of existence when national ambition is strong and the patriotic passions ardent, and the selfish interests have not yet become so powerful as to have generally extinguished the generous affections. But it may be doubted whether the events that occurred in the later stages of the Roman empire, are not fraught with more valuable and important information than those of its earlier annals. Less interesting to the soldier, less animating to the citizen, less heart-stirring to the student, they are more instructive to the philosopher, more pregnant with warning to the statesman. They contain the only instance yet exhibited among men of a nation sinking from no external shock, but from the mere influence of internal decay; and point alone, of all passages in the annals of the species, to the provision made by nature, in the passions and selfishness of men, against the possibility of long-continued and universal dominion.

To any one who attentively considers this all-important subject, two things must be apparent, of the very highest

consequence in arriving at correct ideas on it. The first is, that the Roman empire did not sink under the external violence of the barbarians, but under the weakness and decline which had arisen in its own bosom. The second, that the causes hitherto assigned by historians and philosophers for this internal decay, are either vague generalities, having no definite meaning, and incapable of any practical application, or can be easily shown, even to the most superficial reader, not to have been the real causes of the phenomenon.

There can be no doubt that some of the irruptions of the barbarians—particularly those of the Goths into Romelia, which led to the fatal battles of Thessalonica and Adrianople; and of Alaric into Italy, which terminated in the capture of the Eternal City—were very formidable inroads, and might, in the best days of the empire, have taxed its strength and required all its resolution to repel. But a little consideration must be sufficient to show that, formidable as these invasions were, they could without much difficulty have been withstood, if the empire had possessed the strength which it did in the days of the republic, or in the first two centuries of the Cæsars. The Cimbri and Teutones, whom Marius combated and destroyed on the Rhone and in the north of Italy, were at least as formidable a body of barbarians as those which four centuries afterwards overturned the Western Empire. The forces whom Cæsar conquered in Gaul, Trajan on the Danube, were to the full as powerful as those which carried the standards of the Goths and Vandals to Athens and Carthage. Ætius, in the decline of the empire, and with the mingled Roman and barbarian force of Gaul alone—a mere fraction of the united strength of the empire—defeated Attila in the plenitude of his power, at the head of three hundred thousand men, on the field of Chalons.

Belisarius, with fifteen thousand men, recovered Africa from the Vandals; and there remains a most curious letter of his to the emperor at Constantinople, describing the deplorable want of soldiers which he experienced when he landed in Italy. "We are arrived," says he, "in Italy, destitute of all the necessary implements of war—men, horses, arms, and money. We have collected, with extreme difficulty, in our late circuit through Thrace, about four thousand

recruits, naked, and unskilled in the use of weapons."* Thirty thousand legionary soldiers did the same by Italy under Narses, and overthrew the whole power of the Goths. So high did the Roman soldiers still stand even in the estimation of their enemies, that Totila, the warlike monarch of that warlike people, strove to bribe them into his service by offers of high pay. None had yet been approved equal to these legionary soldiers in battle; and the manner in which, with infinitely inferior forces, they repelled the barbarians on all sides, decisively demonstrates this superiority. The vigour and ability of Heraclius so restored the empire, when wellnigh sinking under the might of its enemies, that for a century it was regarded with awe by the barbarous nations all round its immense frontier. The five provinces beyond the Euphrates were conquered by the Romans from the Parthians during the decline of the empire. Nothing is so remarkable, in the last three centuries of Roman history, as the *small number* of the forces which combated around the eagles, and the astonishing victories which, when led by ability, they gained over prodigious bodies of their enemies. The legions had dwindled into battalions, the battalions into cohorts. The four hundred and fifty thousand men who under Augustus guarded the frontiers of the empire, had sunk to one hundred and fifty thousand in the time of Justinian. † But this hundred and fifty thousand upheld the Eastern Empire for a thousand years. So feeble were the assaults of the barbarians, that for above two centuries of that time the single city of Constantinople, with the aid of the Greek fire, defended itself with scarce any territory from which to draw support. "The nine bands of Honorius," says Gibbon, "did not exceed the number of *five thousand men;* yet this inconsiderable force was sufficient to terminate a war which had threatened the power and safety of Constantine. Such were the feeble arms which decided the possession of the Western provinces, from the wall of Antoninus to the columns of Hercules."‡ It was not the strength of its enemies, therefore, but the weakness of itself, which, after an existence in the West and East of *two*

* Procopius, book iii., chap. 12. Gibbon, vol. iv. chap. 43, p. 126. Milman's Edition.

† Gibbon's *Rome,* vol. iv. chap. 42, p. 71. Milman's Edition.

‡ *Ibid.* chap. 30, p. 86, 47.

thousand years, at length extinguished the Roman empire. Gibbon tells us this expressly :—" The theory of war," says he, " was not more familiar to the camps of Cæsar and Trajan than to those of Justinian and Maurice. The science of tactics, the order, evolutions, stratagems of antiquity, were transcribed and studied in the books of the Greeks and Romans. Their magazines were plentifully stored with arms —in the construction and use of ships, engines, and fortifications, the barbarians admired the ingenuity of a people whom they had often vanquished in the field. But the solitude or degeneracy of the provinces could *no longer supply a race of men* to handle the weapons, to guard those walls, to navigate those ships, and to reduce the theory of war to bold and successful practice. Neither honour, nor patriotism, nor generous superstition, could animate the lifeless bodies of slaves and strangers, who had succeeded to the honour of the legions." *

What, then, were the causes of decay which proved fatal at length to this immense and enduring dominion ? Philosophers in all ages have pondered on the causes ; but those hitherto assigned do not seem adequate to explain the phenomenon. Not that the causes of weakness are baseless or imaginary ; on the contrary, many of them were most real and substantial sources of evil. But what renders them inadequate to explain the fall of Rome is, that they had *all existed, and were in full operation, at the time when the commonwealth and empire were at their highest point of elevation*, and centuries before either exhibited any symptoms of lasting decay. For example, the ancient historians, from Sallust downwards, are loud in their denunciation of the corruption of public morals, and the selfish vices of the patrician classes of society, as being the chief source of the decay which was going forward ; while the growth of the republic had been mainly owing to the extraordinary virtue and energy of a small number of individuals.† But the very circumstance of these complaints having been made by

* Gibbon, vol. iv. chap. 46, p. 295. Milman's Edition.

† " Mihi multum legenti multum audienti quæ populus Romanus domi militiæque præclara facinora fecissent, forte lubuit attendere quæ res maxime tanta negotia sustinuit. At mihi multa agitanti constabat, paucorum civium egregiam virtutem cuncta patravisse : eoque factum ut divitias paupertas, multitudinem paucitas, superaret."—Sallust, *Bell. Cat.*, 32.

Sallust in the time of Augustus, and the fact of the empire of the West having existed for four hundred, that of the East for fourteen hundred years afterwards, affords decisive evidence that this cause cannot be considered as having been mainly instrumental in producing their fall. How is the unexampled grandeur and prosperity of the empire under Nero, Adrian, Trajan, and the two Antonines, whose united reigns extended over eighty years, to be explained, if the seeds of ruin two centuries before had been sown in the vices and corruption of the rich patricians? In truth, so far was general luxury or corruption from being the cause of the ruin of the empire, the cause of its fall was just the reverse. It was the excessive *poverty* of its central provinces, and their inability to pay the taxes, which was the undoubted cause of the catastrophe. The nobles and patricians often were luxurious, but they were not a thousandth part of the nation. The people was miserably poor, and got more indigent daily, in the later stages of its decay.

Modern writers, to whom the philosophy of history for the first time in the annals of mankind has become known, and who were aware of the important influence of general causes on social prosperity, independent of the agency of individual men, have assigned a different set of causes more nearly approaching the truth. Montesquieu says, the decay of the Roman empire was the natural consequence of its extension. This sounds well, and looks like an aphorism: but if the matter be considered with attention, it will be found that it is *vox et præterea nihil.* Those who, with so much complacency, rest in the belief that the fall of the Roman empire was the natural result of its extension, forget that *its greatest prosperity was coexistent with that very extension.* It is impossible to hold that the decay of the empire was the consequence of its magnitude, when the glorious era of the Antonines, during which it numbered a hundred and twenty millions of inhabitants under its rule, and embraced nearly the whole known habitable globe within its dominion, immediately succeeded its greatest extension by the victories, unhappily to us so little known, of Trajan.

More recent writers, seeing that Montesquieu's aphorism was a vague proposition which meant nothing, have gone a

step further, and approached much nearer to the real explanation of the phenomenon. Guizot, Sismondi, and Michelet have concurred in assigning as the real cause of the decay of the Roman empire, the prevalence of slavery among its working population, and the great and increasing weight of taxes to support the imperial government. There can be no doubt that these were most powerful causes of weakness—perhaps, in truth, the immediate and ostensible causes of its ruin. Certainly they stand prominently forth from the facts recorded by contemporary annalists, as the immediate and *visible* causes of the decline of the empire. The history of these melancholy periods is full of eternal complaints, that men could not be got to fill the legions, nor taxes to replenish the treasury; that the army had to be recruited from the semi-barbarous tribes on the frontier; and that vast tracts of fertile land in the heart of the empire had relapsed into a state of nature, or were devoted only to pasturage, from the impossibility of finding cultivators who either would till the land, or could afford to pay the taxes with which it was charged. Doubtless the large proportion —at least a half, perhaps nearly two-thirds—of the people who were slaves, must have weakened the elements of strength in the empire; and the enormous weight of the direct taxes, so grievously felt and loudly complained of,* must have paralysed, to a very great degree, both the industry of the people and the resources of government. But a very little consideration must be sufficient to show, that these were not the real sources of the decline of the empire; or rather, that if they had not been aided in their operation by other causes, which truly undermined its strength, it might have been great and flourishing to this hour, and that they appeared as the main sources of decay when other causes had really dried up the sources of its strength.

Slavery, it must be recollected, was *universal* in antiquity, and is so over two-thirds of the human race at this hour. Much as we may feel its evils and deprecate its severities, we ourselves, till within these three centuries, were entirely fed by serfs; and a few years only have elapsed since the

* They were as high as £9 sterling in the time of Constantine, a sum probably equal to £20 of our money. But the freemen were the higher classes alone, and it is probable a similar class, both in France and England, pay at least as much at this time.--See GIBBON, iii. 88.

whole of our colonial produce was raised by slave labour. America and Russia—the two most rising states in existence—are, the former in part, the latter wholly, maintained by slaves. It was an army in a great measure composed of men originally serfs which repelled Napoleon's invasion, survived the horrors of the Moscow campaign, and carried the Russian standards to Paris, Erivan, and Adrianople. Alexander the Great conquered Asia with an army of freemen wholly fed by slaves. Athens, in the palmy days of her prosperity, had only 21,000 freemen, and 400,000 slaves. Rome itself, in its great and glorious periods, when it vanquished Hannibal, conquered Gaul, subdued the East—in the days of Scipio, Cæsar, and Trajan—was to the full as dependent on slave labour as it was in those of its decrepitude under Honorius or Justinian. Cato was a great dealer in slaves; the Sabine farm was tilled by the arms of rural serfs; Cincinnatus and Regulus worked their little freeholds entirely by means of that unhappy class. Rome was brought to the verge of destruction, nearer ruin than it had been by the arms of the Carthaginians, by the insurrection of the slaves shortly after the third Punic contest, so well known under the appellation of the Servile war. It is perfectly ridiculous, therefore, to assign as a cause of the destruction of Rome, a circumstance in the social condition of its people which coexisted with their greatest prosperity, which has prevailed in all the most renowned nations of the earth in a certain stage of their progress, and is to be found, in our own times, in states the most powerful, and the most likely to attain vast and long-continued dominion.

Equally futile is it to point to the weight of the taxes as the main cause of the long decline and final overthrow of Rome. Taxes no doubt are an evil; and if they become excessive, and are levied in a direct form, they may come in the end to ruin industry, and weaken all the public resources to such an extent as to render a nation incapable of defending itself. But a very little consideration must be sufficient to show that it was not, in the case of Rome, the increase of the taxes taken as a whole, *but the decline in the resources of those who paid them*, which rendered them so oppressive. If, indeed, the national establishments of the Roman empire had gone on increasing as it advanced

in years, and grew in extent and the necessity of increasing them, until at length their charges became excessive and crushing to industry, the theory would have been borne out by the fact, and afforded perhaps satisfactory explanation of the phenomenon. But the fact was *just the reverse.* The military establishment of the Roman empire was so much *contracted* as it advanced in years, that whereas it amounted to 450,000 men in the days of Augustus, or more probably to 675,000, in those of Justinian it had sunk, as already noticed, to 150,000.* So far were the forces of Rome from being excessive in the later stages of the empire, or disproportioned to an empire still, after all its losses, holding so large and fair a portion of the earth under its dominion, that on the other hand they were miserably small ; and the disasters it underwent were mainly owing to the government of the Cæsars never being able to equip an adequate army to repel the attacks of the barbarians. The force with which Belisarius reconquered Africa and recovered Italy never mustered *seventeen thousand men;* and the greater part of his successes were achieved by *six thousand* legionary followers. It was not the weight of the national establishments, therefore, but the *diminished resources of those who were to pay them,* which really occasioned the destruction of the empire.

There are two other facts of vital importance in considering the real causes of the gradual decay and ultimate ruin of the dominion of the legions.

The first of these is, that the extent of the decay was, in the latter stages of Rome, *very unequal* in the different provinces of the empire ; and that while the central provinces, and those in the neighbourhood of the metropolis, were in the most wretched state of decrepitude, the remote districts were *in the highest state of affluence and prosperity.* This important fact is abundantly proved by unquestionable authority, and it sheds a flood of light on the real causes of the ruin which ultimately overtook them all.

The state of agriculture in the Italian plains under the Cæsars, is thus set forth by Gibbon. Even before their

* Gibbon, c. i. and c. xxxii. Agathias states the military establishment in its best days at 675,000, which is much more likely its real amount. *Agathias,* v. p. 157, Paris edition.

time, in the days of Julius Cæsar, Sicily and Sardinia had become the granary of Rome; and the first care of the dictator, in the outset of the civil wars, was to secure their possession.*

"Since the age of Tiberius, *the decay of agriculture had been felt in Italy;* and it was a just subject of complaint that the life of the Roman people depended on the accidents of the winds and the waves. In the division and decline of the empire, *the tributary harvests of Egypt and Africa* were withdrawn; the numbers of the inhabitants continually diminished with the means of subsistence; and the country was exhausted by the irretrievable losses of war, pestilence, and famine. Pope Gelasius was a subject of Odoacer, and he affirms, with strong exaggeration, that in Emilia, Tuscany, and the adjacent provinces, the human species was almost extirpated." †

Of the progress and extent of this decay, Gibbon gives the following account in another part of his great work:—

"The agriculture of the Roman provinces *was insensibly ruined;* and in the progress of despotism, which tends to disappoint its own purpose, the emperors were obliged to derive some merit from the forgiveness of debts, or the remission of tributes, which their subjects were utterly incapable of paying. According to the new division of Italy, the fertile and happy province of Campania, the scene of the early victories and of the delicious retirements of the citizens of Rome, extended between the sea and the Apennines, from the Tiber to the Silarius. Within sixty years after the death of Constantine, and on the evidence of an actual survey, an exemption was granted in favour of 330,000 English acres *of desert and uncultivated land, which amounted to one-eighth of the whole surface of the province.* As the footsteps of the barbarians had not yet been seen in Italy, the cause of this amazing desolation, which is recorded in the laws, (Cod. Theod. lxi. t. 38, l. 2,) can be ascribed only to the administration of the Roman emperors." ‡

Michelet observes, in his late profound and able *History of France:*—

"The Christian emperors could not remedy the growing depopulation of the country, any more than their heathen predecessors. All their efforts only showed the impotence of government to arrest that dreadful evil. Sometimes, alarmed at the depopulation, they tried to mitigate the lot of the farmer, to shield him against the landlord; upon this the proprietor

* "Gnarus et irarum causas, et summa favoris
Annonâ momenta trahi: namque asserit urbes
Sola fames, emiturque metus, cum segne potentes
Vulgus alunt. Nescit plebes jejuna timere.
Curio Sicanias transcendere jussus in urbes.
. . . . . .
Bellaque Sardoas etiam sparguntur in oras.
Utraque frugiferis est insula nobilis arvis:
Nec plus Hesperiam longinquis messibus ullæ,
Nec Romana magis complêrunt horrea, terræ."
—Lucan, iii., 60, 69.

† Gibbon, vol. vi. c. xxxvi. p. 235.
‡ *Ibid.* vol. iii. c. xviii. p. 87. Edition in twelve volumes.

exclaimed he could no longer pay the taxes. At other times they abandoned the farmer, surrendered him to the landlord, and strove to chain him to the soil; but the unhappy cultivators perished or fled, *and the land became deserted.* Even in the time of Augustus efforts were made to arrest the depopulation at the expense of morals, by encouraging concubinage. Pertinax granted an immunity from taxes to those who would *occupy the desert lands of Italy, to the cultivators of the distant provinces, and the allied kings.* Aurelian did the same. Probus was obliged to transport from Germany men and oxen to cultivate Gaul.* Maximian and Constantius transported the Franks and Germans from Picardy and Hainault into Italy; but the depopulation in the towns and the country alike continued. The people surrendered themselves in the fields to despair, as a beast of burden lies down beneath his load and refuses to rise. In vain the emperor strove, by offers of immunities and exemptions, to recall the cultivator to his deserted fields. Nothing could do so. *The desert extended daily.* At the commencement of the fifth century there was, *in the Happy Campania, the most fertile province of the empire*, 520,000 *jugera* (320,000 acres) in a state of nature."†

From the ceaseless struggle of the poor against the oppression of the moneyed classes, the former being supported in the cities by the importations of food from Egypt and Libya, the fatal enmity of classes, the war of the industrious against the rich, was early experienced in the empire. The Emperor Junius Posthumus speaks of it as the unavoidable state of society.‡ He paints in energetic terms the unceasing swallowing up of the patrimony of the poor by the engrossing of the rich. "It is fruitless," says he, "for the little proprietors to establish landmarks and divisions for their freeholds, as sovereigns separate their territories by chains of mountains and rivers. They are expelled from their estates by the ceaseless engrossing of wealth; nor is there an end to the progress of the destroyer till *he meets with another as rich as himself.*§ Everywhere the people are chased from their heritages; they have no longer what they can call their own: that which once sufficed for the maintenance of a city will now *scarcely suffice for the pasturage of a single lord.* The rich are like kings or nations: rivers and mountains are alone adequate to form the boundary of their estates. Well may the poor exclaim,

* "Arantur Gallicana rura *barbaris bobus*, et juga Germanica captiva præbent colla nostris cultoribus."—Probi *Epist. ad Senatum, in* Vopesio.

† Michelet, *Histoire de France*, vol. i. p. 104—108.

‡ "Dives et pauper inimici."—C. Junius Posthumus, *Declamatio* xiii., ap. Paup. 2d.

§ "Parum est proximos æquare terminos et possessiones suas, velut quasdam gentes fluminibus montibusque distinguere. E finibus suis populus excluditur, *nec ullus procedentis finis est, nisi quum in alterum divitem inciderit.*"—*Ibid.*

'O rich man! you are stronger than me, for one of your strokes will destroy me: but you offer more vulnerable points than me, and I can make you die a thousand deaths. How great soever may be your confidence in your possessions, where I am resolved to throw away my own life we are equal.'"*

So general, indeed, was the depopulation of the empire in the time of Justinian, that it suggested to many of the emperors the project of repeopling those desolated districts by a fresh influx of inhabitants. "Justinian II. had a great taste for these emigrations. He transported half the population of Cyprus to a new city near Cyzicus, called Justinianopolis after its founder. But it was all in vain. The desolation and ruin of the provinces continued, and reached up to the very gates of Constantinople, which was maintained entirely by grain *imported at a low price from Egypt, and cattle from the Tauric Chersonesus.*"† Constantine expressly ordered that the fleet of Alexandria, which had previously fed Rome, should transport the grain of Egypt to Constantinople.‡

As a natural consequence of this entire or principal dependence of Rome on foreign or provincial raising of grain, there was, on any interruption of these foreign supplies, the greatest scarcity and even famine in the metropolis. All the vigilance of the emperors, which was constantly directed to this object, could not prevent this from taking place. Tacitus says, that in the scarcity under Claudius, there only remained a supply of fifteen days for the city.§ Famines in Rome were frequent under Augustus, Tiberius, Claudius, and Nero. The first of these emperors promulgated an edict which prohibited Roman senators or knights from purchasing lands in Egypt, lest, by checking the importation of grain, they should be able to starve Rome into submission.‖ Claudian laments that, after Egypt had been assigned to Constantinople,

* "Est tamen et pauperibus interim dolor: et ut facilius nobis noceri potest, ita vobis latius; postremo placens licet tibi, opum tuarum fiducia, dives, si mihi vivere non expedit pares sumus."—C. Junius Posthumus.

† Finlay's *Greece under the Romans.*

‡ Gibbon, chap. xvii., 2, 16. Milman's edition.

§ Tacitus, *Annal.*, xii. 43.

‖ "Augustus, inter alia dominatione, ariara vetitis nisi permissa, ingredi senatoribus aut equitibus Romanis illustribus, seposuit Ægyptum, *ne fame urgeret Italiam,* quisquis eam provinciam claustraque terræ ac maris quamvis levi præsidio adversum ingentis exercitus insidisset."—Tacitus, *Annal.*, ii. 59.

Rome had come to derive its subsistance solely from Libya, and depended on the *double* chances of the seasons and the winds.

——— "Nunquam secura futuri,
Semper inops, ventique fidem poscebat et anni."*

"When Africa revolted under Gildo, in the reign of Honorius, Rome," says Gibbon, "was on *the brink of starvation*, from which she was only saved by large importations *from Gaul*."† The emperor Gallus offered a desert canton of Campania to the philosopher Plotinus, to establish a republic on the model of that of Plato.‡ Rome depended entirely on her provinces; domestic agriculture was ruined. Domitian, with the view of checking that ceaseless decline of agriculture, had prohibited in Italy, Gaul, and Pannonia, the planting of vines without the special authority of government; and ordered the half of those growing to be destroyed. This prohibition continued in force for two centuries.§ But it was all in vain: nothing could succeed in re-establishing the cultivation of grain in the central provinces of the empire; and the Emperor Probus long after, by a new edict, enjoined the replanting of the vines, as the only species of cultivation which could be turned to a profitable account.‖ Claudian represents the Genius of ancient Rome bewailing, in pathetic and eloquent terms, her dependence for food on the nations she had conquered, in words which all governments rendering their people dependent on foreign supplies would do well to bear in mind. "Formerly," the poet makes her say, "my prayers used to be that my legions might triumph on the banks of the Araxes, or that the consul might display his eagles at Susa; *now all I ask is a supply of food to avert the extremities of hunger.* The province of Africa, which furnishes corn to my people, is under the power of Gildo. *He inter-*

* *De Bello Gild.*, v. 64, 65.

† Gibbon, c. xxix.

‡ Porphyrus, *Vita Plotini*, sec. 8; Denina, *Rev. d'Italia*, i. 244.

§ "Ad summam *quondam ubertatem vini, frumenti vero inopiam*, existemans nimio vinearum studio neglegi arva, edixit ne quis in Italia novellarit, utque in provincias *vineta sua direntur*, relicta ubi plurimum dimidia parte."—Suet., *Domit.*, 7.

‖ "Ut ille (Hannibal) oleis Africæ pleraque per legiones, quarum otium reipublicæ atque ductoribus suspectum restoravit; eodem modo hic (Probus) Galliam, Pannoniasque, et Mœsorum collis vinetis replevit."—Aurelius, *Victor. Cæsares*, 37; Eutrop., ix. "Gallis omnibus et Hispanis *ac Britannis* permisit, ut vites haberent, vinumque conficerent.—Vopisc. Prob., 240."

cepts our supplies, and our food is at his mercy. He sells the harvests which belong to the descendants of Romulus; he possesses the fields purchased by my blood. The warrior people which conquered the world, now dishonoured and in want, endures the miserable punishment of peace; *blockaded by no enemy, they are like the inhabitants of a besieged town.* Death impends at every moment: there remain only doubtful supplies for a few days. *My greatness has been my ruin;* I was safer when my territory was more limited; would that its boundaries were once more at my gates! But, if I am doomed to perish, at least let me have a different fate: let me be conquered by another Porsenna; let my city be burned by a second Brennus. All things are more tolerable than hunger."* Even so late as the time of Justinian, Rome was still in great part fed from Sicily; the land was fruitful and the people prosperous.† And in the year 552, Constantinople was mainly maintained by 260,000 quarters, annually furnished by the undecaying fertility of Egypt, which the crops of two thousand years had been unable to exhaust.‡

Nor was the state of Greece in the latter years of the empire more favourable. "No description could exaggerate the miseries of Greece in the later stages of the empire. The slave population, which had formerly laboured for the wealthy, had then disappeared, and the free labourer had sunk into a serf. The uncultivated plains were traversed by bands of armed Sclavonians, who settled in great numbers in Thessaly and Macedonia. The cities of Greece ceased to receive the

* "Advenio supplex, non ut proculcet Araxen
Consul ovans, nostræve premant pharetrata secures
Susa, nec ut Rubris aquilas figamus arenis.
Hæc nobis, hæc ante dabas. Nunc pabula tantum
Roma precor. Miserere tuæ, Pater Optime, gentis—
Extremam defende famem.
* * * * * *
Tot mihi pro meritis Lybiam Nilumque dedêre
Ut *dominam plebem* bellatoremque senatum
Classibus astivis alerent.
* * * * * *
Nunc inhonorus, *egens,* perfert miserabile pacis
Supplicium, *nulloque palam circumdatus hoste*
Obessi discrimen habet. Per singula letum
Impendet momenta mihi, dubitandaque pauci
Præscribunt alimenta dies."—Claud. *De Bello Gild.*

† Gibbon, vol. iv. chap. 41, p. 35. Milman's edition.
‡ *Ibid.*, vol. iii. chap. 40, p. 502. Milman's edition.

usual supplies of agricultural produce from the country; and even Thessalonica, with *its fertile territory and abundant pastures, was dependent on foreign importation for relief from famine.* The smaller cities, destitute of the same advantages of situation, would naturally be more exposed to depopulation, and sink more rapidly to decay. The roads, after the seizure of the local funds of the Greek cities by Justinian, were allowed to go to ruin, and the transport of provisions by land became difficult. When the Byzantine writers, after the time of Heraclius, mention Greece and the Peloponnesus, it is with feelings of aversion and contempt."*

Asia Minor, at the same period, was not in a more prosperous condition. "In Asia Minor," says Finlay, "the decrease of the Greek race had been rapid. This decline, too, must be attributed rather to bad government than to hostile invasions; for from the period of the Persian invasion, in the time of Heraclius, the greater part of that immense country had enjoyed almost a century of uninterrupted peace. The Persian invasions had never been very injurious to the sea-coast, where the *Greek cities were wealthy and numerous;* but the central provinces were entirely ruined. The fact that extensive districts, once populous and wealthy, *were already deserts*, is proved by the colonies which Justinian II. settled in various parts of the country. Population had disappeared even more rapidly than the agricultural resources of the country."†

But while this was the state of matters in Italy, Asia Minor, and Greece—that is, the heart of the empire—its remoter provinces, Spain, Libya, and Egypt, not only exhibited no symptoms of similar decay, but were, down to the very close of the reigns of the Cæsars, in the highest state of wealth, prosperity, and happiness. Listen to Gibbon on this subject in regard to Spain:—"The situation of Spain, separated on all sides from the enemies of Rome by the sea, the mountains, and intermediate provinces, had secured the long tranquillity of that *remote and sequestered country;* and we may observe, as a sure symptom of domestic happiness, that in a period of four hundred

* Finlay's *Greece under the Romans*, 435, 436. † *Ibid.*, 517.

years, Spain furnished very few materials to the history of the Roman empire. The cities of Merida, Cordova, Seville, and Tarragona, were numbered among the most illustrious of the Roman world. The various plenty of the animal, vegetable, and mineral kingdoms, was improved and manufactured by the skill of an industrious people; and the peculiar advantages of naval stores contributed to support an extensive and profitable trade. Many particulars concerning the fertility of Spain may be found in Huet's *Commerce of the Ancients*, c. 40."*

The state of Libya was equally characteristic of the highest and most general prosperity, especially in relation to agricultural industry, at the time when Italy and Greece were thus languishing in the last stage of decrepitude and decay. "The long and narrow tract," says Gibbon, "of the African coast was filled, when the Vandals approached its shores, with frequent monuments of Roman art and magnificence; and the respective degrees of improvement might be accurately measured by the distance from Carthage and the Mediterranean. A simple reflection will impress every thinking mind with the clearest idea of its fertility and cultivation. The country was *extremely populous;* the inhabitants reserved a liberal supply for their own use; *and the annual exportation, particularly of wheat,* was so regular and plentiful, that Africa *deserved the name of the common granary of Rome and of mankind.*"† "When Procopius," says the same author, "first landed in Libya, he admired the populousness of the cities and country, strenuously exercised in the labours of commerce and agriculture."‡

Nor was the condition of Egypt less prosperous in the last ages of the Roman empire; nor its circumstances a less striking contrast to the miserable and languishing condition of the Italian and Grecian plains. It is thus described by Mr Finlay,§ whose recent work has thrown so much light on the social condition of the inhabitants of the Roman empire in their later days:—"If the accounts of ancient historians can be relied on, the population of Egypt had suffered less from the vicious administration of the Roman empire, and from the Persian invasion, than any other part

* Gibbon, c. xxxi. p. 351. † *Ibid.*, c. xxxiii. vol. vi. p. 20.
‡ *Ibid.*, vol. iv. c. xliii. p. 121. Milman's edition.
§ *Greece under the Romans*, 456, 467.

of their dominions ; for at the time of its conquest by the Romans it contained seven millions and a half of inhabitants, exclusive of Alexandria ; and in the last days of the empire it nourished almost as great a number. The Nile spread its fertilising waters over the land ; the canals were kept in a state sufficient for irrigation ; and the vested capital of Egypt suffered little diminution, whilst war and oppression annihilated the accumulation of ages over the rest of the world. The immense wealth and importance of Alexandria, the only port which Egypt possessed for communicating with the empire, still made it *one of the first cities in the universe for riches and population,* though its strength had received a severe blow from the Persian conquest."* Sicily was another exception from the general decrepitude and ruin of the Roman empire in the reigns of the later Cæsars. " In the island of Sicily, the great bulk of the population was Greek, and few portions of the Greek race *had succeeded so well in preserving their wealth and property uninjured."* †

But in the other parts of the empire, to the north of the Mediterranean, the agricultural population was, in the time of Heraclius, *absolutely destroyed.* " The imperial armies, which in the time of Maurice had waged an active war in Illyria and Thrace, and frequently invaded the territories of the Avars, had melted away during the disorders of the reign of Phocas. The loss was irreparable; for in Europe *no agricultural population remained to supply the means of forming a body of local militia, or even a body of irregular troops."*‡ So extreme was the misery which generally prevailed, that infanticide was common, and called forth the special animadversion of the laws ; § and even in the time of Constantine, the father of one child had become entitled to several important immunities.‖ To such a length had the desolation of Italy gone in the time of Aurelian, that he had formed a design, which was only interrupted by his death, of repeopling Tuscany and the shores of Liguria by colonies of slaves;¶ and the generals of the Emperor Gratian sent troops of prisoners, taken from the

* Josephus, ii. 16. † Finlay, 515. ‡ *Ibid.*, 406.
§ Gibbon, vol. i. chap. 19, p. 442. Milman's edition.
‖ Heinec. *ad L. Pap. Pop.;* and Denina, i. 238. ¶ Denina, i. 241.

Goths, Huns, Alani, and others, to Parma, Modena, and Reggio, as colonists. In the time of Theodosius the whole rich plain of Lombardy, between Milan and Bologna, had become a wilderness,* and the Campagna of Naples was already a desert.

It may readily be supposed, that so entire a destruction of the rural population of the Roman empire in the centre of its European provinces, as thus took place under the Emperors, must have been attended with the most fatal effects to their means of defence and national power. The inhabitants of towns, accustomed to sedentary occupations, and habituated to the luxury of baths, the excitement of theatres, the gratuitous distributions of food, could not endure the fatigue, privations, and hardships of the military life. Substitutes were almost universally sought for; and these, amidst the desolation of the country, could be found only in the semi-barbarous tribes on the frontier. Thus the defence of the empire came to be intrusted almost entirely to the arms of foreigners, and it was hard to say whether they were most formidable to their friends or foes. Nothing could supply the place of the rural population on the shores of the Mediterranean. The legions gave a master to the Roman world, and the legions were recruited from Gaul, Germany, Britain, and Pannonia. Thus the dominion of the Capitol was really at an end long before it was formally subverted; and Rome had received a master from the barbarians long before the days of Alaric.

This continued splendour and population of the towns, amidst the ruin of the country, in the declining periods of the Roman empire, has attracted the particular notice of one of the greatest historians of modern times. "In the midst," says Sismondi, "of the general desolation of the country, the continued existence and splendour of the great towns is not so easily explained; but the same thing is now to be witnessed in Barbary and Turkey, and in the whole Levant. Wherever despotism oppresses insulated man, he seeks refuge from its outrages in crowds. The chief Roman towns, in the first three centuries of the Empire, were in great part peopled by artisans, and freedmen, and slaves;

* Denina, *Revol. d'Italia*, i. 251.

but they contained also a number far greater than in our days of men who, limiting their wants to the mere support of existence, spent their lives in indolence. All that population was alike unarmed, unpatriotic, incapable of defence against a foreign enemy; but as it was collected together, and at hand, it always inspired fear to domestic authority. Accordingly, to keep it quiet, there was established a regular gratuitous distribution of corn in the larger towns, and numerous spectacles in the theatres, the amphitheatres, and the circus, maintained at the public expense. The allowance of corn in Alexandria was fixed at 400,000 quarters;* in the great towns in proportion. The carelessness of the future, the love of pleasure and indolence, which have always characterised the inhabitants of great towns, distinguished the Roman provincials even to the latest days of the empire, and in the midst of their greatest calamities. Trêves, the capital of the northern prefecture of Gaul, was not the only city of the empire which was surprised and pillaged by the barbarians, at the moment when its citizens, their heads crowned with garlands, were applauding with enthusiasm the victors in the games of the circus."†

The frequent custom of recruiting the legions by means of slaves, in the later period of the empire, which was wholly unknown in the days of the Republic, reveals, in the clearest manner, the weakness to which, in respect of military resources, it had arrived, long before the external symptoms of decay were visible in its fortunes. Even in the time of Marcus Aurelius, the legions which were to combat the Quadi and Marcomanni, on the Danube, were recruited from the servile class. Justinian went so far as to declare, by a public edict, every slave free who had served in the army.‡ "At last the army came to be composed entirely," says Finlay, "of the rudest and most ignorant peasants, of *enfranchised slaves, and naturalised barbarians*. This increased the repugnance, already sufficiently great, felt by the better class of citizens to enter the military life. The mercenaries formed the most valued and brilliant portions of the army, and it became the fashion to copy and admire the dress and manners of the

* Procopius, *Hist. Arcan.* chap. 26.

† Sismondi, *Chute de l'Empire Romaine*, i. 36. ‡ Novell, 81.

barbarian cavalry."* In the time of Honorius, the villages, the fields, the rural burghs, were destitute of inhabitants. Scarcely even from a corner of the Alps could they draw soldiers; and even when enrolled, it was with the utmost difficulty that desertion could be prevented.† He offered freedom and two pieces of gold each to every slave who would enlist, but he could only raise thirty thousand men in the whole empire.‡

All the ancient historians concur in representing this impossibility of finding native soldiers in its central provinces, as the main cause of the overthrow of the empire. And that this, and not the power of the barbarians, was the real cause of the destruction of the empire, is proved by the fact that, whenever they were well directed, the superiority of the legions was as clearly evinced as in the days of Marius or Cæsar. Whenever the invaders met with a steady and well-combined resistance, they were defeated without much difficulty. The victorious reigns of Claudius II., Aurelian, and Probus, prove the immense superiority of the Roman armies when properly commanded; but the custom which was constantly gaining ground, *of recruiting the legions from among the barbarians*, reveals the deplorable state of *depopulation and weakness* to which three centuries of despotism and bad administration had reduced the Empire.§

But amidst this general prostration of the political and military strength of the Roman Empire, in consequence of the decline and desolation of the *country*, the *great towns* still continued flourishing, and wealth to an extraordinary and unparalleled extent existed among the chief families, some of patrician, some of plebeian origin. That was the grand characteristic of Rome in its later days. The country, in the European part of the empire at least, was daily growing poorer; the cultivation of the fields was neglected; and the provinces, crushed under the weight of

* Finlay, 246, 247.

† "Certo e pure che verso la fine del Regno di Theodosio tutta quella parte di Lombardia ch'e tra Milano e Bologna una di più grasse partite giacea quasi deserta et incolta. E la Campania nel regno di Napoli che e senza dubbio de piu felici terrene d'Italia era condotto a tale che Onorio dovette in un sol privilegio esentar dall ataglie piu de 500,000 giornate di terreno devenuto inutile ed infecondo."—Denina, *Revol. d'Italia*, i. 241, 242.

‡ Gibbon, vol. iii. chap. 30, p. 76. Milman's edition. § Finlay, 117.

the direct taxes, which had become unavoidable, had in most cases sunk to half their former number of inhabitants. But the metropolis, whether in Italy or on the shores of the Bosphorus, was still the seat of opulence, luxury, and prosperity. The strength of Constantinople was sufficient to repel the barbarians, and prolong the life of the Empire of the East, for many centuries after it had ceased to derive effective support from any of its provinces. It is recorded by Olympiodorus, that when Rome was taken by the Goths under Alaric, it was still inhabited by 1,200,000 souls, who were maintained chiefly by the expenditure of seventeen hundred and sixty great families, many of whom had £160,000 of yearly income, equal to at least £300,000 a-year of our money, besides a third more paid in kind. Such was the luxury in which, amidst the general misery, these moneyed patricians indulged, that there were at this time no less than three thousand theatrical singers and dancers; and the number of marble statues was computed to be equal to that of human beings.* And of the flourishing condition of the cities of the empire, especially those which were on the shores of the Mediterranean, even so late as the eighth century, Mr Finlay gives the following account:—

"The strongest proof of the *wealth and prosperity of the* CITIES *of Greece*, even in the last days of the empire, is to be found in the circumstance of their being able to fit out the expedition which ventured to attempt wresting Constantinople from the grasp of a soldier and statesman such as Leo the Isaurian was known to be, when the Greeks deliberately resolved to overturn his throne. The *rural* districts in the eighth century were reduced to a *state of desolation*, and the *towns were flourishing in wealth. Agriculture was at the lowest ebb, and trade in a prosperous condition.*"† Sismondi gives his valuable testimony to the same effect:—"It was at this very time, *when industry in the country was declining*, that the *towns* of the provinces arrived *at their highest degree of opulence.* Adrian excited the emulation of their rich citizens, and he extended to the furthest extremities of the empire the luxury of

* DENINA, i. 249.
† FINLAY, 544; OLYMPIODORUS *apud Photium*, 197.

monuments and decorations, which had hitherto been reserved for the illustrious cities which scorned to be the depôts of the civilisation of the world."* Such, in a few words, was the condition, generally speaking, of all the part of the empire to the north of the Mediterranean, in the decaying period of its existence. The towns were everywhere flourishing; but it was in Africa, Sicily, and Spain alone that agriculture was undecayed. And the decay and ruin of rural industry, and of the inhabitants of the country to the north of the Mediterranean, left them no adequate means of resisting the attacks of the brave but artless barbarians, who there pressed upon the yielding frontiers of the empire. Even the shipping of Italy had decayed: her carrying trade had been transferred to Egypt and Asia Minor. "The naval establishments," says Gibbon, "of Misenum and Ravenna had been gradually neglected; and as the shipping and commerce of the empire were supported by commerce rather than by war, it was natural that they should most abound in the industrious provinces of Egypt and Asia."†

Coexistent with this fatal decline in the rural population and agricultural industry, was the increase of *direct taxation*, which was so keenly felt and loudly complained of in all the later stages of the Roman history. This is a branch of the subject of the very highest importance, because it leads to precisely the same conclusions, as to the real causes of the fall of Rome, as the others which have been already considered.

It is well known that when the Romans first conquered Macedonia, the senate proclaimed a general liberation from taxes and imposts of every kind to the Roman citizens, as the reward of their victories. Nothing could be more agreeable to a Republican state, to whom the first of objects was to lay their obligations on their neighbours. This state of matters, however, could not long continue in an old state charged with the duty, and under the necessity, of keeping up a large establishment to maintain its dominion over its subject provinces. For some time, indeed, the wealth

* Sismondi, *Chute de l'Empire Romaine*, i. 50.
† Gibbon, vol. i. chap. 14, p. 447. Milman's edition.

brought by the conquest of Asia and Egypt into the Roman treasury was so considerable that the necessity for taxes being levied on its own citizens was not felt; and as long as the people had a direct share in the government, they took care to uphold an exemption in their own favour. But when one master was given to the whole Roman world, this invidious system of one class living upon another class was ere long abandoned. "Augustus," says Gibbon, "had no sooner assumed the reins of government than he frequently intimated the insufficiency of the tributes from the provinces, and the necessity of throwing an equitable proportion of the public burdens upon *Rome and Italy*. In the prosecution of this unpopular design, however, he advanced with slow and cautious steps. The introduction of customs was followed by the establishment of an excise; and the scheme of taxation was completed by an artful assessment of the real and personal property of the Roman citizens, who had been exempted from every kind of contribution for above a century and a half."*

Customs on foreign goods imported into Italy was the first species of taxation attempted on the Roman people. "In the reign of Augustus and his successors," says the same historian, "duties were imposed on every kind of merchandise, which, through a thousand channels, flowed to the great centre of opulence and luxury; and in whatever manner the law was expressed, it was the Roman purchaser, and not the provincial merchant, who paid the tax. The rate of the customs varied from the eighth to the fortieth part of the value of the commodity. There is still extant a long, but imperfect, catalogue of Eastern commodities, which, about the time of Alexander Severus, were subject to the payment of duties. Precious stones, Parthian and Babylonian leather, cottons, silks, raw and manufactured, ebony, ivory, and eunuchs, were among the taxed articles. An excise also was introduced by Augustus, of one per cent on whatever was sold in the markets or by public auction; and this extended from the most considerable purchase of lands or houses, to those minute objects which commonly derive their value from their infinite multitude and daily consumption."†

* Gibbon, vol. i. chap. 6, p. 261. † *Ibid.*, vol. i. chap. 6, p. 262.

But ere long these indirect taxes proved unproductive, from the decline in the produce of the mines and contraction of the currency, which will immediately be noticed, and recourse was had to the lasting scourge of *direct taxes.* One of five per cent on legacies and inheritances was first imposed by Augustus, and adhered to by him, in spite of the indignant murmurs of the Roman nobles and people. The rate was raised by Caracalla to a tenth of all inheritances; and, when the privilege of Roman citizenship was extended to the whole provincials of the empire, they were subjected at once both to the former burdens which they had paid as provincials, and the new tax levied on them as Roman citizens.* From that time the direct burdens became daily more oppressive, and at length proved an almost insurmountable bar to industry. "The noxious weed," says Gibbon, "sprang up with the most luxuriant growth, and in the succeeding age darkened the Roman world with its deadly shade. In the course of this history we shall be too often summoned to explain the land-tax, the capitation, and the heavy contributions in corn, wine, oil, and meat, which were exacted from the provinces for the use of the court, the army, and the capital."†

These direct taxes soon became fearfully oppressive, and it is proved, by the clearest evidence, that they were among the leading causes of the decline of the empire. "The whole landed property of the empire," says Gibbon, "without excepting the patrimonial estates of the monarch, was the object of ordinary taxation, and every new purchaser contracted the obligations of the former proprietor. An accurate survey was made of what every citizen should contribute to the public service, and this was made anew every fifteen years. The number of slaves and cattle constituted an essential part of the report; *an oath was administered to the proprietors, which obliged them to disclose the true state of their affairs;* and any attempt to prevaricate or elude the vigilance of the legislature was severely watched, and punished as a capital crime, which included the double guilt of treason and sacrilege. A large portion of the tribute was paid in money; and, of the current coin of the empire, *gold alone could be legally accepted.* The remainder of the

* Gibbon, vol. i. chap. 6, p. 268. † *Ibid.*, p. 268.

taxes, according to the proportion observed in the annual indiction, was levied in a manner still more direct and still more oppressive. According to the different value of lands, their real produce, in the various articles of wine or oil, corn or barley, wood or iron, was transported by the labour or at the expense of the provincials, to the imperial magazines, from whence they were occasionally distributed for the use of the court, the army, and the two capitals, Rome and Constantinople. The commissioners of the revenue were so frequently obliged to make *considerable purchases*, that they were strictly prohibited from allowing any compensation, or from receiving in money the value of those articles which were exacted in kind."*

"Either from accident or design, the mode of assessment seemed to unite the substance of a land to the form of a capitation tax. The return which was sent from every province and district expressed the number of tributary subjects, and the amount of the public impositions. The latter of these sums was divided by the former; and the estimate, that each province and each head was rated at a certain sum, was universally received not only in the popular but the legal computation. Some idea of the weight of these contributions *per head* may be formed by the details preserved of the taxation of Gaul. The rapacious ministers of Constantine had exhausted the wealth of that province, by exacting twenty-five gold pieces (£12, 10s.) for the annual tribute of every head. The humane policy of his successor reduced the computation to seven pieces. A moderate proportion between these two extremes of extravagant oppression and transient indulgence, therefore, may be fixed at sixteen gold pieces, or about *nine pounds* sterling, as the common standard of the impositions of Gaul. This tax was so extremely oppressive, either in itself or in the mode of collecting it, that while the revenue itself was increased by extortion, it was diminished by despair; a considerable part of the territory of Autun was left uncultivated, and great numbers of the provincials rather chose to live as outlaws and exiles than support the weight of civil society."† The *Senatorial* tax (corresponding to our

* Gibbon, vol. ii. chap. 17, p. 86.
† *Ibid.*, vol. i. chap. 14, p. 422. Milman's edition.

income tax) which was levied according to the *declaration required of their property*, was divided into several classes. The most opulent paid annually eight pounds of gold, the next class four, the last two; and those whose poverty might have claimed an exemption, were still assessed at seven pieces.* In the time of Valentinian, when the twelve centuries which marked the duration of the Roman empire had nearly expired, "the taxes were multiplied with the public distress: economy was neglected in proportion as it became necessary, and the injustice of the rich shifted the unequal burden from themselves to the people. The severe inquisition which confiscated their goods compelled the subjects of Valentinian to prefer the more simple tyranny of the barbarians, and to fly to the woods and mountains, or to embrace the vile condition of mercenary servants." † The enormity of this tax is explained by the circumstance that, as the great bulk of the people were slaves, the rolls of tribute were filled only with the names of citizens in decent circumstances. The taxable citizens in Gaul did not exceed 500,000; and their annual payments were about £4,500,000 of our money; a fourth part only of the modern taxes of France."‡ The ordinary land-tax in the eastern provinces was a tenth, though in some cases it rose by the operation of the survey to a fifth, in others fell to a twentieth of the produce. It was valued for a term of years, and paid, unless when exacted in kind, commonly in money.§ So extreme did the weight of the taxes become in the time of Diocletian, that, to use the strong expression of a contemporary, "The proportion of those who received came to exceed that of those who contributed." ‖ According to his religion and situation, says Gibbon, each order chooses either Diocletian, Valerius, Constantine, and Theodosius for the object of his invective; but they unanimously agree in representing the burden of the public impositions, and particularly the land-tax and capitation, as the intolerable and increasing grievance of their own times.

There was one circumstance which rendered the direct taxes peculiarly oppressive in the declining periods of the

* Gibbon, vol. i. chap. 14, p. 434. Milman's edition.
† *Ibid.*, vol. iii. chap. 35, p. 286. Milman's edition.
‡ *Ibid.*, vol. iii. chap. 17. p. 92. § Finlay, pp. 49–50.
‖ Gibbon, vol. i. chap. 13, p. 394. Milman's edition.

Roman empire, and that was the *solid* obligation, as the lawyers term it, which attached to the municipalities, into which the whole empire was divided, of making good the amount of their fixed assessment to the public treasury. Of course, if the municipality was declining, and the same quota required to be made up from its assessable inhabitants by the magistracy, who were responsible for its amount, it augmented the burden on those who remained within its limits; and if they dwindled, by public calamities or emigration, to a small number, it might, and often did, become of a crushing weight. This system is general over the East; and its oppressive effect in the declining stage of states is the chief cause of the rapid decay of Oriental empires. There is a remarkable authentic instrument which attests the ruinous influence of this system in the later stages of the Roman dominion. This is a rescript of the Emperor Majorian, which sets forth,—"The municipal corporations, the lesser senates, as antiquity has justly styled them, deserve to be considered as the heart of the cities and the sinews of the Republic. And yet so low are they now reduced by the injustice of magistrates and the venality of collectors, that many of their numbers, renouncing their dignity and their country, have taken refuge in distant and obscure exile." He strongly urges, and even ordains their return to their respective cities; but he removes the grievances which had forced them to desert the exercises of their municipal functions, by directing that they shall be responsible, not for the *whole sum* assessed on the district, but only for the payments they have actually received, and for the defaulters who are still indebted to the public.* But this humane and wise interposition was as shortlived as it was equitable. Succeeding emperors returned to the convenient system of making the municipal corporations responsible for the sum assessed on their respective districts, and it continued to be the general law of the empire down to its very latest day. Sismondi, in his *Decadence de l'Empire Romaine*, and Michelet, in his *Gaule sous les Romains*, concur in ascribing to this system the rapid decline and depopulation of the empire in its later stages.

But although there can be no question that the conclusions

* Novell Marjorian, tit. iv. p. 34. Gibbon, vol. vi. chap. 36, p. 173.

of these learned writers are in great part well founded, yet this system of taxation, taken by itself, by no means explains the decline and fall of the Roman empire. It requires no argument, indeed, to show that such a system of solid obligations, and of levying a certain sum on districts without any regard to the decline in the resources or number of those who were to pay them, must, in a *declining* state of society, be attended with the most disastrous, and it may be in the end fatal consequences. But it does not explain *how society should be declining. That* is the matter which it behoves us to know. When the reverse is the case—when industry and population are *advancing*, the imposition of fixed tributes on districts is not only no disadvantage, but *the greatest possible advantage to a state*—witness the benefit of the perpetual settlement to the ryots of Hindostan, or of a perpetual quit-rent to English landholders. And that, bad as this system was when applied to a declining state of society, it was not the cause of the ruin of the Roman empire, and would not have proved injurious if the state had been advancing, is decisively proved by several considerations.

I. In the first place, the taxes, and the system of municipalities being responsible for a fixed sum, was not confined to the European provinces of the Roman dominion—viz., Italy, Greece, Gaul, Macedonia, and Roumelia, where the progress of decay was so rapid ; but it was the general law of the empire, and obtained equally in Spain, Libya, Egypt, and Sicily, as in the provinces which lay to the north of the Mediterranean. But these latter provinces, it has been shown, were, when overrun by the barbarians about the year 400, not only nowise in a state of decrepitude, but in *the very highest state of affluence and prosperity.* They had become, and deserved the appellation of, "the common granary of Rome and of the world." They maintained the inhabitants of Italy, Greece, Rome, and Constantinople, by the export of their magnificent crops of grain. Spain was at least twice as populous as it is at this time, Libya contained twenty millions, Egypt seven millions of inhabitants. Sicily was in affluence and prosperity, while the adjoining plains of Italy were entirely laid out in pasturage, or returned to a state of desolation and insalubrity. It is in

vain, therefore, to seek a solution of the decline of the empire in a system which, *universally* applied, left some parts of it in the last stages of decrepitude and decay, and others in the highest state of prosperity and affluence.

II. In the next place, the taxes of the empire were by no means at first of such weight as to account, if there had been nothing else in the case, for the decay of its industry. The tax on inheritances, it has been shown, was at first five, afterwards ten per cent; and the land-tax was ten per cent on the produce. The former tax of ten per cent on successions is the present legacy-tax on movable succession to persons not related to the deceased in England; and ten per cent on the produce is the tithe, and no more than the tithe, which has so long existed in the European monarchies, and, even when coexisting with many other and more oppressive burdens, has nowhere proved fatal to industry. Income of every sort paid ten per cent in Great Britain during the war—the land paid the tithe and poor's rate in addition—and the other taxes yielded a sum four times as great; yet industry of every kind flourished to an extraordinary degree during that struggle. Ever since the termination of the Revolution, the land-tax in France has been far heavier than it was in Rome, varying, according to the *Cadastre*, or valuation, from fifteen to twenty-five per cent; yet, it is well known, public wealth and agricultural produce have increased in an extraordinary degree during that period. It was not, therefore, the weight of the impositions, but the simultaneous circumstances which rendered the northern provinces of the empire *unable to bear them*, which was the real cause of the ruin of its industry.

III. In the third place, whether the magnitude of the naval and military establishments, or the absolute amount of its public revenue, is taken into consideration, it is equally apparent that the Roman empire was at first not only noways burdened with heavy, but was blessed with *singularly light* government impositions. Gibbon states the population of the whole empire, in the time of Augustus, at 120,000,000, or about half of what all Europe, to the westward of the Ural mountains, now contains; and its naval and military establishments amounted to 450,000 armed men—"a force," says the historian, "which, formidable as

it may seem, was equalled by a monarch of the last century, (Louis XIV.,) *whose kingdom was confined within a single province of the Roman empire.*"* Compared with the military and naval forces of the European powers in time of peace, this must seem a most moderate public establishment. France, in the time of Napoleon, with 42,000,000 inhabitants, had 850,000 regular soldiers in arms, besides 100,000 sailors; and Great Britain, in its European dominions alone, with a population of 18,000,000 souls, had above 500,000 regular soldiers and sailors in the public service. France has now, in peace, with a population of 32,000,000 souls, about 360,000 men, between the army and navy, in the public service; and England, with a population of 28,000,000, upwards of 150,000, besides double that number in India. Russia, with 62,000,000 inhabitants, has 460,000 soldiers in the public service. Austria, with 33,000,000, has 260,000. All these peace establishments are twice as heavy, in proportion to the numbers of the people, as that of Rome was in the time of Augustus; and, in subsequent reigns, the number of armed men maintained by the state was so far from increasing, that it was constantly diminishing, and in the time of Justinian had sunk down to 140,000 soldiers, maintained by an empire much more extensive than that of Russia at this moment.

IV. The same conclusion results from the consideration of the absolute amount of the public revenue levied in the Roman empire, compared with what is extracted from modern states. Gibbon estimates the public revenue of the whole empire, in the time of Augustus, at "fifteen or sixteen millions sterling;"† and in the time of Constantine, the revenue derived from Gaul was £4,500,000 a-year.‡ The first of these sums is less than a *third* of what is now levied in time of peace on Great Britain, with less than thirty millions of souls, instead of the hundred and twenty millions who swelled the population rolls of the Roman empire: the last is little more than an *eighth* of what is now extracted from France, having nearly the same limits as ancient Gaul. Supposing that the value of money has declined, from the discovery of the South American mines, to a third of its

* Gibbon, vol. i. chap. 1, p. 30.

† *Ibid.*, vol. i. chap. 1, p. 37. ‡ *Ibid.*, vol. iii. chap. 17, p. 93.

former amount, (and at *this* time, owing to the decline of those mines, it has not sunk more,) still it is apparent that the public burdens of modern times are at least three times as heavy in proportion to the population, as they were in the Roman empire in the highest period of its greatness. As its strength and military establishment constantly declined after that period, there is no reason to suppose that the absolute amount of the public taxes was at any subsequent time greater, although unquestionably, from the decline in the resources of those who were to bear them, they were felt as infinitely more oppressive. And that these taxes were not disproportioned to the strength of the empire, when its resources were unimpaired, and its industry flourishing, is decisively proved by the extremely prosperous condition in which it was during the eighty years when Nerva, Trajan, Adrian, and the two Antonines filled the imperial throne. "At that period," says Gibbon, "notwithstanding the propensity of mankind to exalt the past and depreciate the present, the tranquil and prosperous condition of the empire was warmly felt and honestly confessed by the provincials as well as the Romans."*—"They affirm," says a contemporary writer, "that, with the increase of the arts, the human species has visibly multiplied. They celebrate the increasing beauty of the cities, the beautiful face of the country, cultivated and adorned like an immense garden, and the long festival of peace which was enjoyed by so many nations, forgetful of their ancient animosities, and delivered from the apprehension of future danger."†

Ancient as well as modern historians are full of complaints, in the later periods of the Roman empire, of the prodigious increase of wealth in the hands of the rich, and decline in the remuneration of industry to the poor. Their complaints on this subject are so numerous, and supported by such an array of facts, as to leave no room for doubt that they are well founded. Even so early as the time of Cæsar, this state of things had commenced. It was then computed that there were in the state only two thousand citizens of substance: the engrossing of estates, and buying

* Gibbon, vol. i. chap. 2, p. 91. † Plin. *Hist. Nat.* vol. iii. 5.

up of the small proprietors, was already complained of as a very serious evil.* Indeed, it seems to have been generally true of the whole empire north of the Mediterranean, as Mr Finlay shows was the case down to the very latest periods in Greece, that while industry and population in the country were ruined, the towns were in a state of affluence and prosperity. Even so early as the time of Plutarch, the accumulation of *debts* had come to be complained of as an extensive evil.† "These debts," says Finlay, "were generally contracted to Roman money-lenders. So injurious did their effects become to the provinces, that they afforded to one class the means of *accumulating enormous fortunes by forcing others into abject poverty.* The property of the provincial debtors was at length transferred to a very great extent to Roman creditors. Instead of invigorating the upper classes, by substituting an industrious democracy for an idle aristocracy, it had a very different effect. It introduced new feelings of rivalry and distrust, by filling the country with foreign landlords. The weight of debts seems to have been the chief cause of revolutions in the ancient world. The Greeks could not long maintain the struggle, and they sank gradually lower in wealth, until their poverty introduced an altered state of society, in which they learned the prudential habits of small proprietors, and escape not only from the eye of history, but even of antiquarian research."‡

This constant tendency of wealth, in the later periods of the Roman empire, to accumulate in the hands of the great capitalists, accompanied by the progressive deterioration of the condition of the middle and working classes, is amply proved and forcibly illustrated by Sismondi, in his admirable work on the Decline of the Roman Empire. "During the long peace," says he, "which followed the victories of Trajan and Marcus Aurelius, those colossal fortunes were accumulated which, according to Pliny, ruined Italy and the empire.§ A single proprietor, by degrees, came to buy up whole pro-

* "Non esse in republicâ duo millia hominum qui rem haberunt."—Cic. *de Officiis,* ii. 21. See also Gibbon, vol. iii. chap. 31, p. 113. Milman's edition.

† Περὶ τοῦ μηδεὶν δανειξεισθαι. "De Ære Alieno vitando."—Plutarch.

‡ Finlay, 90.

§ "Verumque confitentibus latifundia perdidêre Italiam, immo ac provincias."—Plin. *Hist. Nat.*

vinces, the conquest of which had in former days furnished the occasion of many triumphs to the generals of the Republic. While this huge capitalist was amassing riches wholly disproportioned to the capacity of man, the *once numerous and respectable, but now beggared, middle class disappeared from the face of the earth.* In districts where so many brave and industrious citizens were to be seen in former times, alike ready to defend or cultivate their fields, were to be found nothing but slaves, who rapidly declined in number as the fields came to be exclusively devoted to pasturage. The fertile plains of Italy ceased to nourish its inhabitants; Rome depended entirely for its subsistence on the harvests which its fleets brought from Sicily, Africa, and Egypt. From the capital to the farthest extremity of the provinces, *depopulation and misery in the country co-existed with enormous wealth in the towns.* From this cause the impossibility of recruiting the legions with native Romans was experienced even in the time of Marcus Aurelius. In his war against the Quadi and the Marcomanni, which had been preceded by a long peace, he was obliged to recruit the legions with the slaves and robbers of Rome."* It is impossible to give a stronger proof of the extent to which this enormous evil of the vast fortunes accumulated in the towns, and the entire ruin of industry in the country, had gone in the last days of the empire, than is to be found in the fact, that when Rome was taken by Alaric, in the year 404 after Christ, the reduction of the capital was owing to the capture of Ostia by the Gothic general, where the harvests of Africa were deposited.† For long after that event, the dependence of Rome on foreign supplies still continued. In the year 584, it was still fed by corn from Egypt; and even so late as the year 643, "the number of citizens still exceeded the measure of subsistence: their precarious food *was supplied from the harvests of Sicily or Egypt;* and the frequent repetition of famine

* Sismondi, *Chute de l'Empire Romaine*, i. 51.

† "The corn of Africa was deposited in Ostia in spacious granaries, for the use of the capital. As soon as Alaric was in possession of that important place, he summoned the city to surrender at discretion, accompanied by the threat that his proposal, if refused, should immediately be followed by the destruction of the magazines, on which the subsistence of the Roman people depended. The clamours of the people, and the terror of famine, subdued the pride of the senate: they listened and obeyed."—Gibbon, vol. iii. chap. 31, p. 129. Milman's edition.

betrayed the inattention of the emperors to a distant province." *

It may readily be conceived, that when this prodigious concentration of wealth in the hands of the great proprietors of towns, and ruin of industry in the country, came to coexist with the *solid* obligations of the rural municipalities for the sum assessed on their districts, the burden of the public taxes, though light at first, compared with what is little complained of in modern times, came to be altogether overwhelming. This accordingly was the case in all the northern provinces of the empire in its later stages. What everywhere preceded their ruin was the desertion of the inhabitants, in consequence of the crushing weight of the public burdens. From the entire failure of the indirect taxes amidst the ruin of agricultural, and the imposition of taxation on urban industry, it had become necessary to make progressive additions to the direct taxes till they became exterminating. "Three great direct taxes," says Sismondi, "alike ruinous, impended over the citizens. The first was the Indictions or Land-Tax, estimated in general at a tenth of the produce, or a third of the clear revenue, and often doubled or tripled by the *Super-Indictions* which the necessities of the provinces compelled them to impose. Secondly, the Capitation Tax, which sometimes rose as high as 300 francs (£12) ahead on the free and taxable citizens; and, third, the Corvées, or forced contributions in labour, which were for the service of the imperial estates, or the maintenance of the public roads. These direct imposts, in the declining days of the empire, so entirely ruined the proprietors of rural estates that they abandoned them in all quarters. Vast provinces in the interior were deserted; the enrolment for the army became daily more difficult, from the disappearance of the rural population; the magistrates of municipalities in town or country, rendered responsible for the assessment of their districts and the levy of their quota of soldiers, fled the country, or sought under a thousand pretexts to escape the perilous honour of public office. So far did the desertion of the magistracy go in the time of Valentinian, (A. D. 364-375,) that when that cruel tyrant ordered the heads

* GIBBON, vol. ii. chap. 45, p. 258, 268. Milman's edition.

of three magistrates of towns in a particular province to be brought to him for some alleged offences, 'Will your Imperial Majesty be pleased to direct,' said the perfect Florentius, 'what we are to do in those towns *where three magistrates cannot be found?*' The order was upon this revoked."*

The disastrous state of the rural districts amidst this accumulation of evils is thus forcibly described by Mr Finlay :—"In many provinces, the higher classes had been completely exterminated. The loss of their slaves and serfs, who had often been carried away by the invaders, had reduced many to the humble condition of labourers. Others had emigrated, and abandoned their land to the cultivators, from being unable to obtain any revenue from it in the miserable state to which the capture of the stock, the loss of a market, and the destruction of the agricultural buildings had reduced the country. In many of the towns, the diminished population was reduced to misery by the ruin of the rural districts in their neighbourhood. The higher classes in the country disappeared under the weight of the municipal duties they were called upon to perform. Houses remained unlet; and even when let, the portion of rent which was not absorbed by the imperial taxes was insufficient to supply the demands of the local expenditure. The labourer and the artisan alone could find bread; the walls of cities were allowed to fall into ruins; the streets were neglected, public buildings had become useless; aqueducts remained unrepaired; internal communication ceased; and with the extinction of the wealthy and educated classes in the provincial towns, the local prejudices of the lower orders became the law of society."†

It is a very remarkable fact, which decisively proves that the ruin of Italian agriculture in the late stages of the empire was entirely owing to foreign importation, that when, by the conquests of the Goths, these importations had come to cease, from the extinction of the wealth which was to pay for them, we learn from Cassiodorus that Italy not only became self-supporting, but in the reign of Theodoric the Ostrogoth, and successor of Alaric, actually, as in the days of the Republic, EXPORTED *the necessary*

* SISMONDI, *Chute de l'Empire Romaine*, i. 44.
† FINLAY, 219, 220.

supplies to the legions in distant provinces. As a necessary consequence, Italy, albeit under barbaric rule and bleeding with Gothic conquest, regained its independence and consideration, and in some degree its felicity during the Republic. A more important fact, or one more clearly proving to what cause the ruin of the empire was really owing, has not been bequeathed by antiquity to modern times.* "Apulia and Calabria," says Gibbon, "under Theodoric, poured their tribute of corn into the granaries of Rome; even the Pontine Marshes were drained by private adventurers: such was the extraordinary plenty which an industrious people produced from a grateful soil, that a quarter of wheat was sold for five shillings and sixpence."†

Such, on a nearer survey, was the condition of the Roman empire which preceded its fall. From it may be seen how widely the real causes of its decline differed from the vague generalities of Montesquieu, that the ruin of the empire was the necessary consequence of its extension; or the still vaguer declamations of the scholars, that it was the corruption incident to great and long-continued wealth which enervated the people, and rendered them incapable of defending themselves against the Northern nations. In truth, both these causes did operate, and that too in a most powerful manner, in bringing about the ruin of the empire; but they did so, not in the way supposed by these authors, but in an *indirect way*, by inducing a new set of evils, which destroyed industry in the most important of its provinces, by depriving the industrious of a market for their industry, and rendering the public burdens overwhelming, by changing the value of money. The operation of these causes can now be distinctly traced by us, because we feel them working

* Cassiodorus, Lib. iii. Epist. 44. See also Denina, *Revol. d' Italia*, i. 339, 340. "Regnando Teodorico non solamente *non fu bisogno di cercar biade straniare* ma i granai dell' Italia bastorono ancoro a pascer gli eserciti del re che guerreggivano nelle provincie lontane. Il che avenne spezialmente nel 508 in tempo che ardeva nelle Gallie la guerra tra i Franchi Egli Ostrogoti padroni della Provenza. Cassiodoro ebbetante cura perche Roma avesse eziando abbondevole il vivere non che il necessario (per la quel citta, none trovo mai, quanto ful ungo il regno de Teodorico, che si cercassero grani dell' Africa, come s'era costumato per tanti secoli,) ma potesse parimente fornir Milano e le provincie della Vinezia de granai che opportunmente s'erano stabilite in Tortona en Pavia. Ne solamente *si migliora allora, lo stato d' Italia*, per le forze interne che la saviezza de governanti l' accrebbe."

† Gibbon, vol. iii. chap. 39, pp. 466, 469. Milman's edition.

among ourselves: their existence has not hitherto been suspected, or their effects traced by philosophers, because no state in modern Europe but our own had come within the sphere of their influence. And to see what these causes really were, it is only necessary to recall, in a few propositions, to the reader's mind, the general result of the foregoing deduction :—

I. During the Republic, and till the commencement of the empire, agriculture was in the most flourishing state in Italy ; the exportation of grain was general to the distant provinces, the legions even in distant stations were fed by the produce of Italian agriculture, and it was in its sturdy, free cultivators that the legions were recruited which conquered the world.

II. *From the time of Tiberius*, cultivation declined in the Italian and Grecian plains, and continued to do so to the fall of the empire. Pasturage came to supersede agriculture ; population disappeared in the fields ; the free cultivators, the strength of the legions, were ruined ; the flocks and herds were tended only by slaves ; the small proprietors became bankrupt, or fled the country ; and the whole land in the European provinces of the empire fell into the hands of a limited number of territorial magnates, who resided at Rome or Constantinople, and mainly upheld, by their profuse expenditure, the prosperity of those capitals of the empire.

III. In the midst of the general decline of rural industry in all the provinces to the north of the Mediterranean, the wealth and prosperity of the great cities remained undecayed. The small provincial towns were in great part ruined ; but the towns, especially such as were on the sea-coast, continued flourishing, and received in their ample bounds all the refluent population from the country. Rural industry languished and expired, but commerce was undecayed ; the fortunes of the great capitalists were daily accumulating ; and in no period in the history of mankind were urban incomes so great as in the city of Rome, on the eve of its capture by the Goths.

IV. While this was the state of matters to the north of the Mediterranean—that is, in the heart of the empire—the remoter agricultural provinces of Spain, Sicily, Libya, and

Egypt, were in the very highest state of prosperity ; they fed all the great cities of the Roman world by their immense exportations of grain, and yet enough remained, down to their conquest by the Vandals under Genseric, to maintain a vast population at home, greater than has ever since existed in those countries, in a state of affluence and comfort.

V. Taxation, from the time of its first introduction under Augustus, was at first chiefly indirect, and by no means oppressive. Gradually, however, the produce of the indirect taxes failed, or became inadequate to the wants of the empire, and recourse was had to direct taxes, levied chiefly on landed property and successions. But these direct taxes were at first light, and not a third part of those levied on Britain or France during the war ; and the public establishments of the Roman government were not a fourth, in proportion to the population, of those now maintained by the great European monarchies during peace.

VI. In process of time, however, the resources of the people, in the principal provinces of the empire, and especially those to the north of the Mediterranean, declined to such a degree, that though the military and naval establishments of the empire were reduced to a third of their former amount, and became inadequate to defend its frontiers against its enemies, the direct taxes required to be continually increased, till they became so oppressive as to destroy industry, and prove the immediate cause of the depopulation and ruin of the empire.

VII. When the importation of foreign grain into Italy was stopped by the conquest of that peninsula by the Goths, and the dispersion of the riches which had so long purchased it from Africa, agriculture revived in Italy ; and it not only became, under Theodoric, self-supporting and independent, but even exported subsistence to distant provinces of the Ostrogoth kingdom.

Such are the *facts*, as established by the unanimous and concurring testimony of all the best informed historians ; and now for the causes which produced these facts. They are set forth and supported by an equally clear and undisputable array of authorities.

Even so early as the latter days of the Republic, the

system was introduced of feeding the Roman people with grain derived by tribute from the provinces. In the time of Augustus, the annual quantity distributed to the poorer citizens of Rome was 1,200,000 *modii*, or 35,156 quarters. But *Tiberius went a step further, and actually gave bounties on the importation of foreign grain.* "An enormous quantity of grain," says Finlay, "was distributed in this way, which was received as tribute from the provinces. Cæsar found 320,000 persons receiving this gratuity. It is true he reduced the number to one half. The greater part of this grain was drawn from Sicily, Africa, and Egypt. In the time of Alexander, generally 75,000 *modii* was distributed daily. This distribution enabled the poor to live in idleness, and was itself extremely injurious to industry; but another arrangement was adopted by the Roman Government, which rendered the *cultivation of land around Rome unprofitable to the proprietors.* A large sum was annually employed by the state *in purchasing grain in the provinces*, and in transporting this supply to Rome, where it was *sold at a fixed price to the bakers.* Augustus appointed an officer styled *Prefectus Annonæ*, whose duty was to provide by Government purchases for the subsistence of the people. An allowance was also made *to the private importers of grain*, in order to insure a constant supply.* In this way, a very large sum was expended *to keep grain cheap in a city* where a variety of circumstances tended to make it dear. This singular system of annihilating capital, *and ruining agriculture and industry*, was so deeply rooted in the Roman administration, that similar gratuitous distributions of grain were established at Antioch and Alexandria, and introduced into Constantinople when that city became the capital of the empire." †

The necessary effect of this system was the cessation of agriculture in Italy, the ruin of the small proprietors, and the engrossing of the land in the provinces by a few great landholders, who cultivated their extensive estates by means of slaves. "Riches, far exceeding the wealth of modern

* It is curious to find Tacitus praising the establishment *of bounties on* the importation of foreign grain by Tiberius, without a word on the evil effects of the system.—*Annal.* vi. 13. "Quibus *e provinciis et quanto majorem quam Augustus* rei frumentariæ copiam advectaret."

† Finlay, 53.

sovereigns, flowed into the hands of the great proprietors ; villas and parks were formed over all Italy on a scale of the most stupendous grandeur ; and land *became more valuable as hunting-ground than as productive farms.* The same habits were introduced into the provinces. In the neighbourhood of Rome, agriculture was ruined by the public distribution of grain received as tribute from the provinces, and by the bounty granted to merchants importing to secure a maximum price of bread. The same system proceeded in the provinces ; and similar distributions at Alexandria and Antioch must have been equally injurious."* When Constantine established his new capital on the shores of the Bosphorus, he was under the necessity of adopting, and even extending, the same ruinous system. "Wealthy individuals from the provinces were compelled to keep up houses at Constantinople, pensions were conferred upon them, and a right to distributions of provisions to a considerable amount was annexed to those dwellings. These rations consisted of bread, oil, wine, meat, and formed an important branch of revenue even to the better class of citizens. These distributions were entirely different from the public ones at Rome, which were established as a gratification by the state to the poor citizens who had no other means of livelihood. The tribute of grain from Egypt was appropriated to supply Constantinople, and that of Africa was left for the consumption of Rome. This was the tie which bound the capital to the emperors, and the cause of the toleration shown to its factions. They both felt they had a common interest in supporting the despotic power by which the provinces were drained of money to support the expenditure of the court, and supply provisions for the people."†

Although, however, these public distributions of grain in the chief towns of the empire had some effect in checking the cultivation of corn in Italy, Greece, and Asia Minor, by depriving its cultivators of their best market, yet *the private importation of grain* from these great corn countries must have been a far more serious and general evil. Gibbon states the number who received rations at Constantinople daily in the time of Constantine at 80,000, and in Rome in the time of Tiberius it was 180,000. Supposing the other

* Finlay, 105. † *Ibid.*, 137.

great towns were fed in the same proportion, perhaps a million of persons in the Roman world were nourished at the expense of the state on Egyptian or African grain. But a million of persons consume annually a million of quarters of grain; not a sixtieth part of the annual consumption of the British empire at this time, and probably not a two-hundredth part required by the 120,000,000 souls who composed the Roman empire in the days of the Antonines. But though the state paupers were thus but a small fraction of the whole consumers of foreign grain, yet the *general importation was immense*, and became, ere long, so great as to constitute the entire source from which the population of Italy, as well as Constantinople and the adjacent provinces of Roumelia, Macedonia, and Greece, were fed. It was this *general importation*, not the gratuitous distributions, which ruined Italian agriculture; for it alone was on a scale commensurate with the population of the Italian peninsula, and could alone account for its general ruin. Tacitus expressly says, it was the *preference* given to African agriculture, not the gratuitous distributions, which destroyed Italian cultivation. "At, Hercule, olim ex Italiâ legionibus longinquas in provincias commeatus portabantur: nec nunc infecunditate laboratur; *sed Africam* POTIUS *et Egyptum exercemus, navibusque et casibus vita populi Romani permissa est.*" * The supply of grain for the Roman world was entirely obtained from Spain, Sicily, Africa, and Egypt, while Greece was maintained by corn imported from Poland.† It was not that the Italian and Grecian fields had become sterile: Tacitus expressly says the reverse,—"*nec* nunc infecunditate laboratur." But the country in which grain produced fifteen fold, as Italy did, could not compete with that which produced sixty or eighty fold on the banks of the Nile. In vain were colonies formed of old soldiers established in various parts of Italy, and with great advantage, by successive emperors. They could never compete in the raising of grain with Sardinia, Libya, Sicily, and Egypt; they were speedily ruined, or bought up by a rich patrician in the neighbourhood, who invariably adopted the only profitable cultivation—that of cattle tended by

* TACITUS, *Annal.* xii. 43. † MICHELET, *Histoire de France*, i. 277.

slaves.* Nor could the industry of the centre of the empire, where money was plentiful, comparatively speaking, and labour was therefore dear, stand against the competition of the remoter provinces, where it was scarce, and labour was therefore cheap.

The ruin of Italian and Grecian agriculture from this cause is so evident, that it is admitted by the ablest advocates of an unlimited freedom in the corn trade. "The first effect of this system," says a late able and learned writer on the Liberal side, "*was the ruin of Italian agriculture.* The natural market for the corn of the Italian farmer was, to a great extent, destroyed by the artificial supplies obtained from the provinces. Hence, as Dureau de la Malle has remarked, (ii. 218,) the history of the seventh and eighth centuries of Rome presents this singular contrast—that the agriculture, the population, and products of Italy diminish progressively as she extends her conquests and power. The fatal influence which the gratuitous supplies from the provinces would exercise upon the native agriculture, was perceived by Augustus; but he abandoned his intention of altering the system, from a conviction it would be restored by his successor. The result was, that southern and central Italy, instead of being tilled by a race of hardy active farmers, themselves freemen, and working on their own land, was divided into plantations cultivated by slaves." † This explains how it came to pass that Spanish agriculture took such a start from *the time of Tiberius;* and how, in the

* "I soldati licenziati non si contentavano di starsi in Taranto ed in Anzio, ch' erano in quel tempo delle piu fiorite e deliziose citte d'Italia, com' era mai possible che le colonie pigliassero radice ne borghi *de solati e de serti* e nelle Campagna piu besognivol d'essere ripopolate. Per la qual cosa, le terre che non rimasero del tutto deserte, si riunero *in vastissime tenute de poderi, che i ricchi acquistavano de mano in mano.* E che facivano secondo il solito costumi coltivare de gli schiavi; disordine oltre ogni credere distruttivo per diu effetti inevitable: una la deminuzione notabile del frutto della terra, la quale spartita in piccole, porzione, et coltivata da proprietari e da borghesi, rende senza controversia maggior copia di frutti; l'altro la dispersione della piu utile spezio del genere umano, quali sono i rustici labori, e i borghesi d'umil fortuna. Quindo osservo' Plinio, correndo ancora il primo secolo del' imperio Romano. Che i vasti poderi avevano rovinata Italia. *La feconditata dell' Egitto, e di tante Provincie dell' Africa vicine al' mare, delle Isole di Sicilia e Sardigna* potiva supplire al difitto delle campagne d'Italia *o abbandonate, o mal cultivate, o cambiate a bello studio in parchi o giardini.* Le scelte di soldati che si facevano per tutte le provincie adempiavano, *la mancanza de soldati Italiani,* de cui fuori delle Coorte Pretorii comincio *d'essere scarcissimo il numero* anchi sotto i primi Imperadori."—Denina, *Rev. d'Italia,* i. 151, 152.

† *Edinburgh Review.* April 1846. No. 168. Page 370-371.

general ruin of the empire, Spain, Africa, and Egypt were the only provinces which retained their prosperity. It will be recollected that it was in the reign of Tiberius that bounties were first given by the Roman Government to the private importers of foreign grain.

Of the main dependence of the Western empire in its declining days on Africa, not merely for the necessary supply of food, but even for the chief resources and strength of the state in the midst of the desolation of its European fields, Sismondi gives a striking account:—"The loss of Africa at this period, (A. D. 439,) was perhaps the greatest calamity which the empire of the West could have undergone. It was its only province the defence of which cost no trouble; the only one from which *they drew money, arms, and soldiers, without its ever requiring any back.* It was at the same time the *granary of Rome and of Italy.* The gratuitous distributions of grain at Rome, Milan, and Ravenna had, over the whole Italian peninsula, destroyed the cultivation of grain. Experience had proved that the return could not pay its expense; and the reason was, that the more fertile fields of Africa furnished a part of the harvest destined for the nourishment of the people of Italy. The sudden stoppage of that supply by the conquest of Africa by the Vandals, caused a cruel famine in Italy; which still further reduced its wretched inhabitants."* And so entirely did Constantinople become dependent on foreign importation of sea-borne grain from Egypt and the Ukraine for its support, that "when the Persians, in the year 618, overran Egypt, and stopped the usual supplies of grain from that province, the famine became so alarming, that the Government determined upon transferring *the seat of empire to Carthage* in Africa, as the most likely point from whence the dominion of Syria and Egypt might be regained."† The latter of these had long been regarded as *the most valuable province of the empire.*‡

When this entire dependence of the great cities in the northern parts of the empire, for centuries together, on Spain, Sicily, Africa, and Egypt, is considered, it must with every rational mind cease to be a matter of surprise that its western

* Sismondi, *Chute de l'Empire Romaine*, i. 233.
† Finlay, 389. ‡ Finlay, 392.

and northern provinces declined in industry and population ; that these grain provinces to the south of the Mediterranean alone retained their numbers and prosperity ; and that under the constant decline, in the European provinces, in the market for agricultural produce, the rural population disappeared, and the recruiting of the army in the country became impossible. It is not surprising that while they were enrolling slaves in Italy, and enlisting barbarians on the Danube and the Rhine, to defend the frontiers, from Africa and Spain alone they drew supplies both of money and soldiers, without requiring to send back any. The latter provinces were the granary and garden of the empire ; the only part of it where rural industry met with remunerating prices or adequate encouragement. And the same circumstances explain in a great degree how it happened that, while the *rural* districts of Italy, Greece, Asia Minor, and Roumelia were continually declining in population, rental, and revenue, their *towns*, especially on the sea-coast, were, down to the last days of their existence, in a flourishing condition. These towns were the seat of manufactures and commerce. It was by their capital that the vast corn trade by which all the cities of the empire were fed was carried on. It was their fabrics which mainly furnished the means of purchasing the immense proportion of this grain, which, being imported by private importers, required to be paid for in some species of manufactured produce. And the reason why grain was raised so much cheaper, and therefore profitably, in Egypt, Libya, and Spain, than in Italy and Greece, was, partly, that the former of these countries were by nature blessed with a more prolific soil and a warmer sun than the latter ; and, partly, that as Rome and Constantinople were the two capitals of the empire, the greater part of its wealth was attracted, either by taxes, tribute, or the concourse of the rich, to them, and, consequently, the abundance of riches there rendered money cheap, labour dear, and cultivation, when exposed to foreign competition, unprofitable.

But there was more in the case than this. Simultaneously with the vast and increasing importation of foreign grain, which at length destroyed cultivation in all the northern provinces of the empire, *a continual diminution of its circu-*

lating medium was going forward; and it was to the combined and contemporaneous operation of these two causes that the ruin of the empire is beyond all question to be ascribed.

So early as the days of Tiberius, the abstraction of the gold and silver currency of the empire, by the incessant drain of foreign commerce, was loudly complained of by the Roman writers; and there is the most decisive proof that, in the course of time, the supply of the precious metals in the empire became so inadequate to the wants of its inhabitants, that their value was enhanced to a great and ruinous degree. It was the commerce of the East which first induced this destructive drain upon the metallic treasures of the empire. "The objects," says Gibbon, "of Oriental traffic were splendid and trifling; silk—a pound of which was esteemed worth a pound of gold—precious stones, and a variety of aromatics, were the chief articles. The labour and risks of the voyage were rewarded with almost incredible profit; but it was made on Roman subjects, and at the expense of the public. As the nations of Arabia and India were contented with the produce and manufactures of their own country, silver, on the side of the Romans, was the principal, if not the only instrument of commerce. It was a complaint worthy of the gravity of the senate, that, in the pursuit of female ornaments, the wealth of the state was irrevocably given away to foreign and hostile nations. The annual loss is computed by a writer of an inquisitive but censorious temper, (Pliny,) at £800,000 sterling. Such was the style of discontent brooding over the dark prospect of approaching poverty."* Eight hundred thousand pounds a-year, equivalent to about two millions of our money, must have been a severe drain upon the supply of the precious metals in the Roman empire; and we, who have seen in 1839 the Bank of England reel, and the United States bank fall, under the effect of an exportation of six or seven millions of sovereigns to buy foreign grain in a single year, can appreciate the effect of such a constant drain upon a state, the metallic resources of which were much less considerable than those of England at this time; and which had no paper currency, either in the form of bills or notes, to supply their place.

* Gibbon, vol. i. chap. ii. p. 90.

The immense importation also of African and Egyptian grain, which continued from the time of Tiberius down to the very close of the empire, must have occasioned a great additional abstraction of the precious metals from the Roman world. It has already been shown that a very small proportion of the grain imported from these distant provinces was remitted in the shape of tribute. By far the greater part, probably nineteen-twentieths of the whole supply, was imported by private merchants for sale, as it could be got from them cheaper than it could be raised at home. This imported corn, of course, required to be paid for in something. But the inhabitants of the countries from which it came—Spain, Sicily, Africa, and Egypt—for the most part slaves, blessed with a fine climate, requiring little covering, and nearly destitute of artificial wants, did not require, and could not consume, any considerable amount of Italian or Grecian fabrics. Thus by far the greatest part of the price of the imported grain was paid in gold and silver, for which there is a constant demand in all countries, savage or civilised. "Nearly the whole commerce which Italy carried on," says Denina, "in the later stages of the empire, was the most ruinous in which a nation can be engaged; for *it consisted of subsistence and luxuries imported, and money exported*—for the Italians had no manufactures to compensate the luxuries and necessaries which were introduced."* The thing was unavoidable. A nation which imports foreign grain largely, *must* in all ages export the precious metals as largely, because the corn, of course, is brought from those countries where it is raised the cheapest—and the countries where this is the case are those where labour is cheap, money scarce, and artificial wants unknown. Money is what these countries want, and money is what their surplus produce is nearly all exchanged for.

In addition to this, the mines which supplied the Roman

* "Tutto il commercio d'Italia nel tempo di Gildone era meramente passivo e rovinoro; parcio che deviansi Cerean di fuore non meno le cose piu necessarie al sostentamento della vita che quelle che servivano alla morbidezza, ed al lusso: e non apparise punto che s'estrausse d'Italia alcune genere di manifatture che potesse fare il compenso di cio che mancava. Cosi che mettendo insieme anche le contribuzione che gia di buon tempo si pagavano a barbari, per le quali si faccono estraordenarie esazioni in Roma stessa l'Italia aureble dovuto *in breve tempo essere esausta di denaro* se non che per avventura l'entrate che molti de grandi di Roma godevano in altre provincie, *potevano supplire in parte al difetto delle cose d'Italia.*" —Denina, *Revol. d'Italia*, i. 244.

world failed to a considerable extent under the emperors. "The poverty of Greece, as of the whole empire," says Jacob, "was further increased *by the gradual rise in the value of the precious metals;* an evil which began to be generally felt about the time of Nero, and affected Greece with great severity, from the altered distribution of wealth in the country with which it was attended. Greece had once been rich in mines, which had been a source of wealth and prosperity to Siphnos and Atticus, and had laid the foundation of the power of Philip of Macedon. The fiscal measures of the Romans soon rendered it a *ruinous speculation for individuals to attempt working mines of the precious metals;* and, in the hands of the state, they soon proved unprofitable. Many mines were exhausted; and even *though the value of the precious metals was enhanced,* some mines beyond the sphere of the Roman power *were abandoned* from those causes, which, after the second century of the Christian era, produced a sensible diminution in the commercial transactions of the Old Hemisphere."* Greece shared in the general decay: her commerce and manufactures, being confined to supplying the consumption of a diminished and impoverished population, sunk into insignificance. *An accumulation of debts became general throughout the country,* and formed an extensive evil, as already observed, in the time of Plutarch.†

As this great diminution in the supply, and drain upon the treasures of the precious metals in the time of the emperors, lowered the value of every species of produce, so it proportionally augmented debts, and swelled the already overgrown fortunes of the capitalists. What Finlay says of Greece was true of the whole European provinces of the empire,—"*The property of the Grecian debtors was at last transferred to a very great extent to the Roman creditors.*"‡ This again produced another effect upon the manners of the inhabitants of the great cities, which had an equally powerful effect in increasing the drain upon that portion of the precious metals which was employed in the public currency. So vast was the addition which the contraction of the currency, and

* Jacob's *Historical Inquiry into the Production and Consumption of the Precious Metals*, i. 35, 42.

† Finlay, 88.

‡ *Ibid.*, 90.

constant drain of the precious metals to pay for importations, made at once to the fortunes of the rich and the misery of the poor, that a contemporary annalist, Sidonius Appollinarius, calls the moneyed patricians "the *sole owners of the empire.*"* The rich patricians of Rome, Antioch, and Constantinople, possessed of colossal fortunes to which nothing in modern times will bear a comparison, and nursed in habits of luxury and expense beyond anything we can even conceive, daily augmented the proportion of their immense incomes which was devoted to the purposes of extravagance. "The historians of the second and third centuries," says Finlay, "are filled with lamentations on this subject."† It is not surprising that it was so. Men possessed, in private stations, of as much as three or four hundred thousand pounds a-year of modern money, could not get through their incomes without indulging in the habitual purchase of the most costly articles. Society in this way had come to verify the saying of Bacon—"Above all things, good policy is to be used that the treasure and money in a state *be not gathered into few hands.* For, otherwise, a state may *have a great stock and yet starve.* And money is like muck, not good unless it be spread."

Hence the consumption and permanent fixing of gold and silver in the form of plate and costly ornaments, increased in the great families down to the very close of the empire; and while the currency was constantly declining, and prices in consequence falling in the provinces, the colossal capitalists of Rome and Constantinople were daily absorbing more of the precious metals in these beautiful but unproductive objects. The quantity of gold and silver moulded into the form of vases, statues, tripods, and personal ornaments, which was accumulated in Rome at the time it was taken by the Goths,

* "La somma dell imposizione s'esigiva per parte del Fisco dall corpo della citta, per che la *scarcita del denaro*, la miseria et l'impotenza de particolari di soddisfare a gli imposti costringavano i corporati a pagare del proprio. All estorsioni de magistrati, de grandi, s'aggiunnsero novellamente quelle delle usurai, la potenza de quali fu tale e tanta in questo secolo, che Sidonio Appollonaro ebbe a chiamargli *i soli padroni del' Imperio Romano.* Perche quando cessa i i tributi delle provincie fuencora consumato il denaro d'Italia a stipendiare i re barbari, *la scarcite del denaro,* et la necessite ogni volta maggiore ch'ebbero gli Imperadori d'impor tributi, ebbe al fine ridotta gli Italiani a tutti gli estremi a cui riducon si d'ordinarie gli indebitati e i mal avviati mercanti, d'accelerarsi la rovina con vie di piu svantaggiori contratti."—Denina, *Revol. d'Italia,* i. 299.

† Finlay, 89.

would exceed belief, were it not attested by the unanimous testimony of all the contemporary writers. Great part of it was thrown into the Tiber, where it still remains covered by the alluvial deposits of fourteen centuries; the most precious of the spoils were buried with Alaric in the bed of a stream in Calabria, where that redoubtable conqueror was overtaken by the common fate of mortality. The place where he was interred was kept a profound secret, and the slaves who dug his grave in the bed of the river, of which the course had been turned aside for the purpose, were put to death, and buried with him and his treasures; and the river itself was immediately led into its old channel, that its ceaseless flow might secure, as it since has done, the grave of the mighty chief from disturbance, and enable him to present himself loaded with his earthly spoils in the land of spirits.*

The concurring operation of these causes produced, in the three last centuries of the Roman empire, a very great scarcity in the supply of the precious metals for the purposes of the public currency, and consequently a most distressing fall in prices, and diminution in the remuneration of industry, accompanied by a proportional increase in the weight of debt and taxes. And the progressive effect of these changes appeared in the clearest manner, in the repeated changes which were made by successive emperors in the value of the gold and silver coins which passed current in the empire. Gold became progressively so scarce in proportion to silver, that the proportion between the two, which at first had been 1 to 10 in the time of Augustus, rose in time to 1 in $12\frac{1}{2}$, and was fixed by Constantine the Great at 1 to 14 2-5ths.† In consequence of this rise in the value of gold—the precise counterpart of what was experienced in Great Britain in the later years of the war, when a *light* guinea sold for 25s.—the quantity of gold in the *aureus*, or chief gold Roman coin, was progressively diminished, till it came to contain little more than *half* its former weight of that precious metal. The learned Greaves has shown, after diligent inquiry, that while in the time of the Antonines the *aureus* weighed 118 grains, in the time of Majorian, in the fifth

* Gibbon, v. 329.

† Arbuthnott *on Ancient Coins*, c. 5. Gibbon, i. 90, c. ii.

century, it had come to weigh only 68.* This is a clear indication, that 68 grains of gold were then equal in value to what 118 grains had been three centuries before; for Majorian, by a special decree, ordered all *aurei* of whatever reign, the Gallic *solidus* alone excepted, to pass, not according to weight, but standard.† So thoroughly was this increase in the value of gold understood by the tax-gatherers, that they "exacted the whole payment in *gold;* but they refused the current coin of the empire, and would accept only such *ancient pieces* as were stamped with the names of Faustina or the Antonines. The consequence was, that the municipal magistrates, who were responsible for the amount assessed on their district, renounced their dignity and country, and took refuge in distant and obscure exile."‡ That is the most decisive proof to what a grievous extent the currency had, from the operation of the causes which have been mentioned, come to be contracted; for as gold constitutes, from its superior value, at least nine-tenths of the circulating medium of every civilised state, so great a rise in its value could only have been occasioned by a very great contraction of the whole currency. We know in what state the metallic currency of Great Britain was when the *light* guinea was selling for twenty-five shillings.

In the latter days of the empire, when the invasions of the barbarians began, and its provinces were liable to be pierced through and overrun by columns of their predatory hordes, the universal and well-founded terror produced a general *hoarding* of the precious metals, which entirely withdrew them from circulation, until they were forced from the trembling inhabitants by threats of massacre or conflagration. The effect of this, in contracting the currency, and causing the little that remained to disappear altogether from the circulation, of course was prodigious. It lowered to almost nothing the money price of every species of industry, and proportionally augmented the weight of public and private debts—the subject of such loud and constant complaints from ancient historians. "In the reign of Justinian," says Gibbon, "a *rapid decrease was felt in the*

* Greaves *on Ancient Coins*, i. 329, 331. † Gibbon, vol. vi. c. 36, p. 173.

‡ Gibbon, c. xxxvi. vol. iii. p. 305. "Fessas provincialium varia atque multiplici tributorum exactione, fortunas et extraordinariis fiscalium solutionum oneribus attritas," is the strong expression in Majorian's *Novell*, tit. 34.

forced and circulating capitals which constitute the national wealth. His revenues, in consequence, were not equal to his expenses. Every art was tried to extort from the people their gold and silver : and fathers were sometimes compelled to prostitute their daughters to appease the collectors. He lived with the reputation of a hidden treasure; but he bequeathed to his successor only the payment of his debts."* Nor was this evil confined to the latest periods of the empire of the West—the years which immediately preceded its fall. From the time of Commodus, who succeeded Marcus Antoninus, the incursions of the barbarians into the northern provinces of the empire had been severely felt; and from the era of the separation of the empires of the East and West, they were almost perpetual, and sometimes extended far into its interior provinces. The effect of these alarms and dangers, in producing a universal disposition to hoard, and consequently rendering money everywhere scarce, prices cheap, and debts and taxes oppressive, was very great, and may be regarded as one of the chief causes of the excessive and crushing weight which the direct burdens of the state acquired in the later periods of the empire.

The resource so well known, and so often had recourse to with the happiest effects, in modern times, to supply the void produced by a temporary or permanent drain of the precious metals, was unknown in antiquity. *They had no paper currency.* Even bills of exchange were unknown. These, as is well known, were a contrivance of the Jews, in the Middle Ages, to transport their wealth in a commodious form, when threatened with persecution, from one country to another. To what an extent paper of these various kinds has come to supply the place of gold and silver, may be judged of by the fact, that, during the war, the paper currency of Great Britain and Ireland rose to £60,000,000 sterling; and that, at the present time, the private bills in circulation in it are estimated at £132,000,000 sterling. But this admirable resource, by which an accidental or temporary dearth of the precious metals is supplied by a paper currency, circulating at par with it, and fully supplying, as long as credit lasts, its place, was unknown in the ancient world. Gold, silver, and copper were their sole

* Gibbon, vol. iii. c. xl. p. 509, 510. Milman's edition.

circulating mediums ; and consequently, when they were progressively withdrawn, by the causes which have been mentioned, there was nothing left to supply their place. Instantly, as if by the stroke of a fell necromancer, disasters of every kind accumulated on the wretched inhabitants. Credit was violently shaken ; money disappeared ; prices fell to a ruinous degree ; industry could obtain no remuneration ; the influence and ascendency of realised capital became irresistible ; and the only efficient power left in the state was that of the emperor, who wrenched his taxes out of the impoverished hands of his subjects, or of the creditors and landlords, who, by legal process, exacted their debts from their debtors, and drove them to desperation. This was exactly the social state of the empire in its declining days. We can appreciate its horrors, from having had a foretaste of them during the commercial crises with which, during the last twenty-five years, this country has been visited.

From what has now been said, it is evident that the two circumstances which occasioned the fall of the Roman empire, were *the destruction of its domestic agriculture, by the importation of grain from its distant provinces, and the accumulation of debts and taxes, arising from the contraction of the currency*, induced by many concurring circumstances. If these causes be attentively considered, it will be found that they not only afford a perfect solution of its fall, but explain how it happened at the time it did, and had not occurred at an earlier period. They show what it was which, slowly but steadily wasting away the vitals of the empire, successively destroyed its rural population and agricultural industry, and at length crushed its property under the increasing load of debts and taxes. They explain how it happened that the indirect taxes, which at first were sufficient, with a moderate imposition of five per cent on inheritances, to support the large military and naval establishments of Augustus, became gradually unproductive, and were at length succeeded by direct taxes on land, of severe, and in the end destructive amount, yet inadequate to uphold even the Lilliputian military and naval forces of Justinian. They show what every page of contemporary history demonstrates, that it was neither the superior military power of

the barbarians, nor the diminished skill and courage of the legions, which occasioned the overthrow of the mighty fabric, but the *wasting away of its internal resources* which was the real cause of its decay. They tell us that it was not the timidity of the legions, but *the inability of Government to array them in sufficient strength*, which rendered them unequal to the contest with an enemy whom, during the vigour of the state, they had so often repelled. They explain how it happened that Italy and Greece had become deserts in their rural districts, before one of the barbarians had crossed either the Alps or the Hæmus ; and how Africa, Spain, and Egypt, alone of the provinces, retained their prosperity, when rural industry was wellnigh extinct in all other parts of the empire. Lastly, they explain how it happened that, while the rural districts to the north of the Mediterranean were so generally relapsing into a state of desolation, the great cities of Greece and Italy long retained their prosperity, and the wealth of the capitalists and great proprietors who inhabited them was continually increasing, while all other classes were ground to the earth under the weight of public or private burdens.

It must appear, at first sight, not a little extraordinary that the very causes which thus evidently led to the destruction of Rome—viz., the unlimited importation of foreign grain and contraction of the currency—are those which have been most the object of the policy of the British Government, for the last quarter of a century, by every possible means to promote in this country. They were imposed upon Rome by necessity. The extension of the empire over Spain, Africa, and Egypt, as well as the magnanimous policy of its government towards all its subjects, rendered a free trade in grain with the provinces, and large importations from the great corn countries, unavoidable. Public misfortunes, the increasing luxury of the rich, that very great importation of grain itself, the failure of the Spanish and Grecian mines, and the entire want of any paper currency to supply the place of the metals thus largely abstracted, necessarily and unavoidably forced this calamitous contraction of the currency upon the Roman empire. But the British policy has adopted the same principles, and done the same things, when *no necessity* or external pressure rendered

it unavoidable. A free trade in grain is to be introduced, not in favour of distant provinces of the empire, but of its neighbours and its enemies. The currency has been contracted, not by public calamities, or any lasting deficiency in the means of supplying the failure of the ordinary sources of gold and silver, but by the fixed determination of Government, carried into execution by repeated acts of Parliament in 1819, 1826, and 1844, to abridge the paper circulation, and deprive the nation of the benefit of the great discovery of modern times, by which the calamitous effects of the diminution in the supply of the precious metals throughout the world have been so materially prevented.

Such a result must appear under all circumstances strange, and would be inexplicable, if we did not reflect, that the same impulse which was communicated to the measures of Government in Rome, by the influence of the capitalists and the clamorous inhabitants of great towns, is equally felt in the same stage of society in modern times. The people in our great cities do not call out, as in ancient days, for gratuitous distributions of corn from Libya or Egypt; but they clamour just as loudly for free trade in grain with Poland and the Ukraine, which has the effect of swamping the home-grower quite as completely. The great capitalists do not make colossal fortunes by the plunder of subject provinces, as in the days of the Roman proconsuls; but they never cease to exert their influence to procure a contraction of the currency by the measures of Government, which answers the purpose of augmenting their fortunes at the expense of the industrious classes just as well. Political writers, social philosophers, practical statesmen, fall in with the prevailing disposition of *the most influential classes;* they deceive themselves into the belief that they are original, and promulgating important truths, when they are merely yielding to the pressure of the strongest, or at least the most noisy, class at the moment in society, and of that one which is best able to remunerate their exertions. The Reform Bill gave *three-fifths* of the British representation to the members for burghs. From that moment the eventual adoption of legislative measures favourable to the interests of capital, and agreeable to the wishes of the inhabitants of towns, how destructive soever to those of the country, was as cer-

tain as the daily distribution of Egyptian grain to the inhabitants of Rome, Antioch, and Constantinople was, when the mob of these cities became, from their formidable numbers, an object of dread to the Roman Government.

The only answer which the partisans of free trade in grain have ever attempted to these considerations is, that the ruin of the agriculture in the central provinces of the Roman empire was owing, not to the importation of foreign corn as a mercantile commodity, but to its *distribution gratuitously* to the poorer citizens of Rome, Constantinople, and some of the larger cities in the empire. They *admit*, in its fullest extent, the decay of domestic agriculture, and consequent ruin of the state; but allege it was owing to this gratuitous distribution, which was in fact a poor-law, and not to the free trade in grain.* But a very little consideration must be sufficient to show that this is an elusory distinction; and that it was the unrestricted admission of foreign wheat by purchase which in reality, coupled with the contraction of the currency, destroyed the dominion of the legions.

I. In the first place, the number who received these gratuitous distributions was, as already shown, *so small*, when compared to the whole body of the grain-consuming population, that they could not materially have affected the market for agricultural produce in Italy. Not more than 150,000 persons received rations in Rome daily, and perhaps as many in the other cities of Italy. What was this in a peninsula containing at that period 16,000,000 or 18,000,000 of souls, and with 2,300,000 in its capital alone?† It is evident that the gratuitous distributions of grain, taking those at their greatest extent, could not have embraced a fiftieth part of the Italian population. What ruined the agriculturists, who used to feed the remaining forty-nine fiftieths? The unlimited importation of cheap grain from Spain, Egypt, Sicily, and Libya, and nothing else.

II. In the next place, even if the gratuitous distributions of grain had embraced twenty times the number which they

* See *Edinburgh Review*. No. 168. April 1846.

† There are now 20,000,000 inhabitants in Italy, and it was certainly as populous in the time of Augustus, when Rome alone, which now has 180,000, contained 2,386,000 souls.

did, nothing can be clearer than that the effect *on agriculture* is the same, whether cheap foreign grain is imported by the private importer, or bought and distributed by the Government. If the home-grower *loses his market*, it is the same thing to him whether he does so from the effects of private importation or public distribution; whether his formidable competitor is the merchant, who brings the Libyan grain to the Tiber, or the Government, which exacts it as a tribute from Sicily or Egypt. The difference is very great to the *urban* population, whether they receive their foreign grain in return for their own labour, or get it doled out to them from the Government store as the price of keeping quiet. But to the *rural* cultivator it is immaterial whether destruction comes upon him in the one way or the other. It is the *importation of foreign grain* which ruins him; and the effect is the same, whether the price paid is the gold of the capitalist or the blood of the legions.

In truth, both the Government of the Cæsars in ancient, and that of Great Britain in modern times, in pursuing the policy of establishing free trade in grain, encouraging foreign importation of general subsistence, and either contracting, or doing nothing to counteract the contraction of the currency, in the latter stages of their respective empires, were striving to resist the operation of a great law in the moral world, intended to check the growth and prevent the perpetuity of nations. "It is to no purpose," said Dr Johnson, "to tell one that eggs are a penny the dozen in the Highlands, and twopence a-piece in London; that is not because *eggs are many, but because pence are few.*" This simple observation points to a law of incalculable importance and ceaseless operation in the moral world. It is continually checking the accumulation of mankind in their old localities, and favouring their dispersion and increase in the distant parts of the earth. The accumulation of wealth in the seats of ancient civilisation, in the centre of extensive dominions, renders money cheap, and therefore labour dear in such places. Agricultural industry, incapable of receiving extensive aid from the application of machinery and the division of labour, raises its produce at a much more expensive rate in the old state than in the comparatively new one. The centre of a great empire is always undersold in the production

of rude produce by its extremities ; it always can undersell them in manufactures. This simple fact comes in process of time to have a decisive effect upon the policy of governments and the fate of nations.

The consumers in towns, the capitalists who employ labour, see with envious eyes the high price of labour and the necessaries of life—the necessary consequence of the plenty of money—and clamour incessantly for the unlimited introduction of cheap distant grain, and the contraction of the currency, in order to obviate these disadvantages. They would willingly have the wealth in their own hands, which is the growth of ages of prosperous opulence, and purchase subsistence and pay labour at the rate of rude and indigent states. They succeed to a great degree in achieving their objects, by contracting the currency, and forcing free trade upon an old state ; but they do so by draining its heart's blood, and prostrating alike its independence and national strength. They lower prices, but it is only by diffusing misery ; they pacify for a short time the inhabitants of towns, but it is only by permanently ruining those of the country. In the struggle to maintain the prices of poverty in the midst of riches, industry is blighted, small capitals are destroyed, the value of money rises, while that of labour falls. The nation comes to consist only of overgrown capitalists and indigent multitudes. The indirect taxes levied on the declining fruits of industry cease to be productive, and Government is driven to the last and dire resource of heavy and increasing direct taxation. Capital, alone left to meet the demands of the state, is, as the just retribution for its rapacity, in the end destroyed. Deprived of all the perennial fountains of prosperity and strength, the nation falls under the suicidal acts of its own rulers. They put it to death for fear of its dying. Human ingenuity seeks in vain to escape the operation of the law, which at the appointed season limits the growth and undermines the power of nations. In seeking to avoid Scylla it falls into Charybdis ; by ruining the prosperity of others, human selfishness destroys its own. The same law which makes an apple fall to the ground, restrains the planets in their course, and upholds the magnificent fabric of the heavens. Dr Johnson's observation points to a law

which limits the lifetime of nations, restrains the march of conquest, and has for ever rendered universal dominion impossible.

But although, for this reason, it was inevitable that the weakness arising from the prostration of the strength of its central provinces should in the end have destroyed the power, and terminated, if not overturned by actual violence, the existence of the British empire, yet the means of long combating this mortal malady had been given to it by Providence, if they had not been thrown away by the selfish ambition or the blind infatuation of its later rulers. Its vast and growing colonies in every part of the world afforded it the means of counteracting for centuries the decrepitude of age by the vigour and the elasticity of youth. It was inevitable in the days of its maturity that Great Britain should come to depend for the supply of subsistence and the materials of manufactures, in part at least, on distant states—but those distant states might have been its own transmarine possessions. Then prosperity and riches would have reacted incessantly on that of the parent state. The original stock would have been long vivified and invigorated by the growth of its offshoots. But the selfish and suicidal policy which has alienated or ruined our colonies, for the sake of a temporary profit to the dominant urban class at home, has thrown away these advantages, and brought the weakness and difficulties of age upon the state, which still possesses within itself the means of prolonging a respected and prosperous existence.

KARAMSIN'S RUSSIA

[FOREIGN AND COLONIAL REVIEW, JULY 1844]

NEVER was there a more just observation, than that there is no end to authentic history. We shall take the most learned and enthusiastic student of history in the country—one who has spent half his life in reading the annals of human events—and still we are confident that much of what is about to be stated in this article will be new to him. Yet it relates to no inconsiderable state, and is to be found in no obscure writer. It relates to the history of Russia, the greatest and most powerful empire, if we except Great Britain, which exists upon the earth, and with which — sometimes in alliance, sometimes in jealousy — we have been almost continually in contact during the last half century. It is to be found in the history of Karamsin, the greatest historian of Russia, who has justly acquired a European reputation; but whose great work, though relating to so interesting a subject, has hitherto, in an unaccountable manner, been neglected in this country.

We complain that there is nothing new in literature—that old ideas are perpetually recurring, and worn-out topics again dressed up in a new garb—that sameness and imitation seem to be irrevocably stamped upon our literature, and the age of original thought, of fresh ideas, and creative genius, has passed away! Rely upon it, the fault is not in the nature of things, but in ourselves. The stock of original ideas, of new thoughts, of fresh images, is not worn out; on the contrary, it has hardly been seriously worked upon by all the previous efforts of mankind. We may say of it, as Newton did of his discoveries in physical science, that "all that he had done seemed like a boy playing on the sea-

shore, finding sometimes a brighter pebble or a smoother shell than ordinary, while the great ocean of truth lay all undiscovered before him." We complain of sameness of thought, of want of originality in topics, and yet we live in the midst of a boundless profusion of new facts and virgin images, for the first time brought forward by our extended intercourse with all parts of the world, and the heart-stirring events of our political history. There never was a period in the annals of mankind, if we except that of the discovery of America, in which new facts and novel images, and the materials for original thought, were brought with such profusion to the hand of genius; and there never was one in which, in this country at least, so little use was made of them, or in which the public mind seems to revolve so exclusively round one centre, and in one beaten and wellnigh worn-out orbit.

Whence has arisen this strange discrepancy between the profusion with which new materials and fresh objects are brought to hand, and the scanty proportion in which original thought is poured out to the world? The cause is to be found in the impossibility of getting the great majority of men to make the "past or the future predominant over the present." If we add "*the absent*" to the famous apophthegm of Johnson, we shall have a summary of the principal causes which in ordinary times chain mankind to the concentric circles of established ideas. Amidst common events, and under the influence of no peculiar excitement, men are incapable of extricating themselves from the ocean of habitual thought with which they are surrounded. A few great men may do so, but their ideas produce no impression on the age, and lie wellnigh dormant till they are brought to fructify and spread amidst the turbulence or sufferings of another. Thence the use of periods of suffering or intense excitement to the growth of intellect and the development of truth. *The past and the future are then made the present;* ages of experience, volumes of speculation, are then concentrated into the passing results of a few years, and thus spread generally throughout mankind. What original thought was evolved in England during the fervour of the Reformation! in France during the agonies of the Revolution! Subsequent epochs of ease and peace to each were

but periods of transfer and amplification—of studied imitation and laboured commentary. There has been, there still is, original thought in our age; but it is confined to those whom the agitation of reform roused from the intellectual lethargy with which they were surrounded, and their opinions have not yet come to influence general thought. They will do so in the next generation, and direct the course of legislation in the third. Public opinion, of which so much is said, is nothing but the re-echo of the opinions of the great among our fathers; so slowly, under the wise system of Providence, is truth and improvement let down to a benighted world!

We have been forcibly led to these observations by the study of Karamsin's History of Russia, and the immense stores of new facts and novel ideas which are to be found in a work long accessible in its French translation to all, hardly as yet approached by any. We are accustomed to consider Russia as a country which has only been extricated by the genius of Peter the Great, little more than a century and a half ago, from a state of barbarism, and the annals of which have been lost amidst general ignorance, or are worthy of no regard till they were brought into light by increasing intercourse with the powers of western Europe. Such, we are persuaded, is the belief of ninety-nine out of a hundred, even among learned readers, in every European state; yet we perceive from Karamsin, that Russia is a power which has existed, though with great vicissitudes of fortune, for a thousand years; that Rurick, its founder, was contemporary with Alfred; and that it assailed the Bosphorus and Constantinople in the ninth century, with a force greater than that with which William the Conqueror subverted the Saxon monarchy at Hastings, and more powerful than the armies led against it in after times by the ambition of Catherine or the generals of Nicholas! What is still more remarkable, the mode of attack adopted by these rude invaders of the Byzantine empire was precisely that which long and dear-bought experience, aided by military science, subsequently taught to the Russian generals. Avoiding the waterless and unhealthy plains of Bessarabia and Wallachia, they committed themselves in fearful multitudes to boats, which were wafted down the stream of the Dnieper to the Black

Sea; and when the future conqueror of the East approaches to place the cross on the minarets of St Sophia, he has only to follow the track of the canoes, which a thousand years ago brought the hordes of Rurick to the entrance of the Bosphorus.

Complicated, and to appearance inextricable, as the transactions of the Slavonic race seem at first sight, the history of Russia is yet singularly susceptible of simplification. It embraces five great periods, each of which have stamped their own peculiar impress upon the character of the people, and which have combined to produce that mighty empire which now numbers sixty millions of men among its subjects, and a seventh of the surface of the globe beneath its dominion.

The first of these periods is that which commences with the foundation of the Russian empire by Rurick, in 826, and terminates with the commencement of the unhappy division of the empire into appanages or provisions for younger children—the source of innumerable evils both to the monarchy and its subjects—in 1054. The extent to which the empire had spread, and the power it had acquired, before this ruinous system of division commenced, is extraordinary. In the tenth century, Russia was as prominent, comparatively speaking, among the powers of Europe, in point of territory, population, resources, and achievements, as she is at this moment. The conquests of Oleg, of Sviatoslof, and of Vladimir, to whom the sceptre of Rurick had descended, extended the frontiers of the Russian territory from Novogorod and Kieff—its original cradle on the banks of the Dnieper—to the Baltic, the Dwina, and the Bug, on the west; on the south, to the cataracts of the Dnieper and the Cimmerian Bosphorus; in the north, to Archangel, the White Sea, and Finland; on the east, to the Ural Mountains and shores of the Caspian. All the territory which now constitutes the strength of Russia, and has enabled it to extend its dominion and influence so far over Asia and Europe, was already ranged under the sceptre of its monarchs before the time of Edward the Confessor.

The second period comprehends the innumerable intestine wars, and progressive decline of the strength and consideration of the empire, which resulted from the adoption of the

fatal system of appanages. This method of providing for the younger children of successive monarchs, so natural to parental affection, so just with reference to the distribution of possessions among successive royal families, so ruinous to the ultimate interests of the state, was commenced by the Grand-prince Dmitri in 1054, and afforded too ready a means of providing for the succeeding generation of princes to be soon abandoned. The effects of such a system may without difficulty be conceived. It reduced a solid compact monarchy at once to the distracted state of the Saxon heptarchy, and soon introduced into its vitals those fierce internal wars which exhaust the strength of a nation, without either augmenting its resources or adding to its reputation. It is justly remarked, accordingly, by Karamsin, that for the next three hundred years after this fatal change in the system of government, Russia incessantly declined; and after having attained, at a very early period, the highest pitch of power and grandeur, she sank to such a depth of weakness as to be incapable of opposing any effectual resistance to a foreign invader.

The third period of Russian history, and not the least in the formation of its national character, commenced with the Tartar invasion, and terminated with the final emancipation of the Muscovite dominions. In 1224, the first intelligence of a strange, uncouth, and savage enemy having appeared on the eastern frontier, was received at Kieff, then the capital of the Muscovite confederacy—for it no longer deserved the name of an empire; and two hundred and fifty years had elapsed before the nation was finally emancipated from their dreadful yoke. This was accomplished by the abilities and perseverance of John III., the true restorer, and in some degree the second founder of the empire, in 1480, in which year the *last* invasion of the Tartars was repulsed, and the disgraceful tribute so long paid to the Great Khan was discontinued. During this melancholy interval, Russia underwent the last atrocities of savage cruelty and barbaric despotism. Moscow, then become the capital, was sacked and burnt by the Tartars, in 1387, with more devastation than afterwards during the invasion of Napoleon; every province of the empire was repeatedly overrun by these ruthless

invaders, who, equally incapable of giving or receiving quarter, seemed, wherever they went, to have declared a war of extermination against the human race, which their prodigious numbers and infernal energy in war generally enabled them to carry on with success. Nor was their pacific rule, where they had thoroughly subjugated a country, less degrading than their inroad was frightful and devastating. Oppression, long continued and systematic, constituted their only system of government; and the Russians owe to these terrible tyrants the use of the knout, and of the other cruel punishments which, from their long retention in the empire of the Czars, when generally disused elsewhere, have so long excited the horror of Western Europe.

The fourth period commences with the abolition of the ruinous system of appanages by the mingled firmness and cunning, wisdom and fortune, of John III., about the year 1480; and continued till the genius of Peter the Great gave the country its great impetus two hundred years after. This period was a chequered one to the fortunes of Muscovy, but, on the whole, of general progressive advancement. Under Vassili, the successor of John III., the Russians made themselves masters of Smolensko, and extended their frontiers on the east to the Dwina. Under John the Terrible, who succeeded him, they carried by assault, after a terrible struggle, Kazan, in the south of Muscovy, where the Tartars had established themselves in a solid manner and formed the capital of a powerful state, which had more than once inflicted, in conjunction with the Lithuanians, the most dreadful wounds on the vitals of the empire. Disasters great and repeated still marked this period, as wave after wave break on the shore after the fury of the tempest has been stilled. Moscow was again reduced to ashes during the minority of John the Terrible; it was again burnt by the Tartars; and a third time, by accident; the victorious Poles advanced their standards to its gates, and so low were his fortunes reduced, that that heroic but bloody monarch had at one period serious thoughts of deserting his country, and seeking refuge in England from his numerous enemies. Yet Russia, thanks to the patriotism of her children and the indomitable firm-

ness of her character, survived all these disasters. In the succeeding reign her arms were extended across the Ural mountains over Siberia—though her dominion over its immense wilds was for long little more than nominal—and a fortress was erected at Archangel, which secured to her the command of the White Sea.

The last period commences with the taking of Azoph, by Peter the Great, in 1696, which first opened to the youthful Czar the dominion of the Black Sea, and terminates with the prodigious extension of the empire, consequent on the defeat of Napoleon's invasion. Europe has had too much reason to be acquainted with the details of Russian victories during this period. Her wars were no longer with the Tartars or Lithuanians: she no longer fought for life or death with the Khan of Samarcand, the hordes of Bati, or the Czar of Kazan. Emerging with the strength of a giant from the obscure cloud in which she had hitherto been involved, she took an active, and at length a fearful part in the transactions of Western Europe. The conquest of Azoph, which opened to them the command of the Black Sea—the fierce contest with Sweden, and ultimate overthrow of its heroic monarch at Pultowa—the bloody wars with Turkey, commencing with the disasters of the Pruth, and leading on to the triumphs of Ockzakow, of Ismael, and Adrianople—the conquest of Georgia, and passage of the Russian armies over the chain of the Caucasus and to the waters of the Araxes—the acquisition of Wallachia and Moldavia, and extension of their southern frontier to the Danube—the partition of Poland, and entire subjugation of their old enemies, the Lithuanians—the seizure of Finland by Alexander—in fine, the overthrow of Napoleon, capture of Paris, and virtual subjugation of Turkey by the treaty of Adrianople, have marked this period in indelible characters on the tablets of the world's history. Above Alexander's tomb are now hung the keys of Paris and Adrianople: those of Warsaw will be suspended over that of his successor! The ancient and long dreaded rivals of the empire, the Tartars, the Poles, the French, and the Turks, have been successively vanquished. Every war for two centuries past has led to an accession to the Muscovite territory; and no human foresight can predict the period

when the god Terminus is to recede. There is enough here to arrest the attention of the most inconsiderate; to occupy the thoughts of the most contemplative.

History exhibits numerous instances of empires which have been suddenly elevated to greatness by the genius or fortune of a single man; but in all such cases the dominion has been as short-lived in its endurance as it was rapid in its growth. The successive empires of Alexander, Genghis Khan, Tamerlane, Nadir Shah, Charlemagne, and Napoleon, attest this truth. But there is no example of a nation having risen to *durable* greatness, or attained a lasting dominion over the bodies and minds of men, but by long previous efforts, and the struggles and sufferings of many successive centuries. It would appear to be a general law of nature, alike in the material and the moral world, that nothing permanent is erected but by slow degrees, and that hardship and suffering constitute the severe but necessary school of ultimate greatness. In this point of view, there is a remarkable analogy between the history, from the earliest periods, of England, France, and Russia—the three powers which stood forth so prominent in the great fight of the nineteenth century. Their periods of greatness, of suffering, and of probation, from their infancy have been the same; and during the long training of a thousand years, each has at the same time, and in a similar manner, been undergoing the moral discipline requisite for ultimate greatness, and the effects of which now appear in the lasting impression they have made upon the world. We do not recollect to have ever seen reference to this remarkable analogy in the annals of these first-born of European states; but it is so striking, that we must request our reader's attention for a few minutes to its consideration.

The Russian empire, as already mentioned, was founded by Rurick, a hero and a wise monarch, about the year 860; and ere long its forces were so powerful that eighty thousand Russians attacked the Bosphorus, and threatened Constantinople in a more serious manner than it has since been, even by the victorious arms of Catherine or Nicholas. This first and great era in Russian story—this sudden burst into existence—was contemporary with that of Alfred in England, who began to reign in 871, and

nearly so with Charlemagne in France, who died at Aix-la-Chapelle in 814, leaving an empire coextensive with that which, exactly a thousand years afterwards, was lost by Napoleon.

The two centuries and a half of weakness, civil dissension, and external decline, which in Russia commenced with the system of dividing the empire into appanages in 1060, were contemporary with a similar period of distraction and debility, both to the English and French monarchies. To the former, by the Norman conquest, which took place in that very year, and was followed by continual oppression of the people, and domestic warfare among the barons, till they were repressed by the firm hand of Edward I., who first rallied the native English population to the support of the crown, and by his vigour and abilities overawed the Norman nobility in the end of the thirteenth century. To the latter, by the miserable weakness which overtook the empire of Charlemagne under the rule of his degenerate successors; until at length its frontiers were contracted from the Elbe and the Pyrenees to the Aisne and the Loire,—till all the great feudatories in the monarchy had become independent princes, and the decrees of the King of France were not obeyed farther than twenty miles around Paris.

The woful period of Muscovite oppression, when ravaged by the successive armies of Genghis Khan, Tamerlane, and Bati, and when the people for two centuries drank the cup of humiliation from Tartar conquests, or purchased a precarious respite by the ignominy of Tartar tribute, was contemporary with the disastrous English wars in France. The battle of Cressy was fought in 1314, that of Azincour in 1415; and it was not till 1448, that these hated invaders were at length finally expelled from the Gallic shores, by the effects of the heroism of the Maid of Orleans, and the jealousies of the English nobility in the time of Henry VI. If these wars were disastrous to France,—if they induced the horrors of famine, pestilence, and Jacquerie, which ere long reduced its inhabitants a half,—not less ruinous were their consequences to England, exhausting, as they did, the strength of the monarchy in unprofitable foreign wars, and leaving the nation a prey, at their termination, to the furious civil contests of York

and Lancaster, which for above twenty years drenched their fields with blood, almost destroyed the old nobility, and left the weak and disjointed people an easy prey to the tyrannic rule of Henry VIII., who put seventy-two thousand persons to death by the hand of the executioner in his single reign. It is hard to say whether Russia, when emerging from the severities of Tartar bondage—or France, when freed from the scourge of English invasions—or England, when decimated by the frightful carnage of York and Lancaster, was in the more deplorable condition.

From this pitiable state of weakness and suffering all the three monarchies were raised about the same period by three monarchs, who succeeded in each, partly by wisdom, partly by good fortune, partly by fraud, in reconstructing the disjointed members of the state, and giving to the central government the vigour and unity which had been lost amidst the distractions and suffering of former times, but which were essential to the tranquillity and wellbeing of society. John III., who achieved this great work in Russia, was the counterpart of Louis XI., who at the same time accomplished it in France. John III. ascended the throne in 1462, and reigned till 1505 : Louis XI. in 1461, and reigned till 1483. Both were cautious in design, and persevering in execution; both were bold in council rather than daring in the field; both prevailed in a barbarous age, rather by their superior cunning and dissimulation than by the wisdom or justice of their measures. Both had implicitly adopted the Machiavelian maxim, that the end will in all cases justify the means, and employed without scruple fraud and perfidy, as well as wisdom and perseverance, to accomplish their grand object, the restoration of the throne, and abasement of the great feudatories. Both were equally successful. The reunion of the appanages to the crown of the Russian grand-prince, the subjugation of the ancient republic of Novogorod, the annexation of that of Pfosk by his successors, were steps extremely analogous to the defeat of Charles the Bold, and the acquisition of Normandy and Acquitaine by Louis XI., and the happy marriage of Anne of Brittany to his royal successor. Nor was the coincidence of a similar monarch on the throne, and a similar revolution in society in England at the same period, less remark-

able. Henry VII. won the crown of England on the field of Bosworth in 1485, and reigned till 1509. By uniting the rival pretensions of the Houses of York and Lancaster to the throne, through his marriage with the heiress of the former house, he reconstructed the English monarchy; his avarice left a vast treasure, which rendered the crown independent, to his vehement successor; his cautious policy broke down the little power which the fierce contests of former times had left to the Norman nobility. John III., Louis XI., and Henry VII., were the real restorers of the monarchy in their respective kingdoms of Russia, France, and England; and they were men of the same character, and flourished very nearly at the same time.

The next epoch in the history of Russia was that of Peter the Great, whose genius overcame the obstacles consequent on the remoteness of its situation, and opened to its people the career of European industry, arts, and arms. Russia had now gone through the ordeal of greatness and of suffering; it had come powerful, energetic, and valiant out of the school of suffering. But the remoteness of its situation, the want of water communication with its principal provinces, the barbarous Turks who held the key to its richest realms in the south, and the Frozen Ocean, which for half the year barricaded its harbours in the north, had hitherto prevented the industry and civilisation of its inhabitants from keeping pace with their martial prowess and great aspirations. At this period Peter arose, who, uniting the wisdom of a philosopher and the genius of a lawgiver, to the zeal of an enthusiast and the ferocity of a despot, forcibly drove his subjects into the new career, and forced them, in spite of themselves, to engage in the arts and labours of peace. Contemporary with this vast heave of the Muscovite empire, was a similar growth of the power and energy of France and England; but the different characters of the Asiatic and European monarchy, and of the free community, were now conspicuous. The age of Peter the Great in Russia, was that of Louis XIV. in France; of the Revolution of 1688, and of Marlborough, in England. The same age saw the victories of Pultowa and Blenheim, the overthrow of Charles XII. and the humbling of the Grand Monarque. But great was now the difference in the cha-

racter of the nations by whom these achievements were effected. Peter, by the force of Asiatic power, drove an ignorant and brutish race into industry and art; Louis led a chivalrous and gallant nation to the highest pitch of splendour and greatness; William III. was impelled by the free spirit of an energetic and religious community, into the assertion of Protestant independence, and the maintenance of European freedom. But this great step in all the three nations took place at the same time, and under sovereigns severally adapted to the people they were called to rule, and the part they were destined to play on the theatre of the world.

The last great step in the history of Russia has been that of Alexander—an era signalised beyond all others by the splendour and magnitude of military success. It witnessed the conquest of Finland, Georgia, Wallachia, and Moldavia, the acquisition of Poland, and the extension of the empire to the Araxes. Need we say with what events this period was contemporary in France and England?—that the age which witnessed the burning of Moscow, saw also the taking of Paris—that Pitt and Wellington were contemporary with Alexander and Barclay—that but a year separated Leipsic and Waterloo? Coming, as it did, at the close of this long period of parallel advance and similar vicissitudes, during a thousand years, there is something inexpressibly impressive in this contemporaneous rise of the three great powers of Europe to the highest pinnacle of worldly grandeur—this simultaneous efflorescence of empires, which during so long a period had advanced parallel to each other in the painful approach to worldly greatness. Nor let the intellectual pride of western Europe despise the simple and comparatively untutored race, which has only within the last century and a half taken a prominent part in the affairs of Europe. The virtues, whether of nations or individuals, are not the least important which are nursed in solitude; the character not the least commanding which, chastened by suffering, is based on a sense of religious duty. The nation is not to be despised which overthrew Napoleon; the moral training not to be forgotten which fired the torches of Moscow. European Liberalism and infidelity will acquire a right to ridicule Muscovite ignorance and barbarity when it has produced equal achievements, but not till then.

All the recent events in history, as well as the tendency of opinion in all the enlightened men in all countries who have been bred up under their influence, point to the conclusion that there is an original and indelible difference in the character of the different races of men, and that each will best find its highest point of social advancement by institutions which have grown out of its ruling dispositions. This is but an exemplification of the profound observation long ago made by Montesquieu, that no nation ever rose to durable greatness but by institutions in harmony with its spirit. Perhaps no national calamities have been so great, because none so lasting and irremediable, as those which have arisen from the attempt to transfer the institutions of one race and stage of political advancement to another family of men and another era of social progress. Recollecting what great things the Slavonic race has done both in former and present times, it is curious to see the character which Karamsin gives of them in the first volume of his great work :—

"Like all other people, the Slavonians, at the commencement of their political existence, were ignorant of the advantages of a regular government; they would neither tolerate masters nor slaves among them, holding the first of blessings to consist in the enjoyment of unbounded freedom. The father of a family commanded his children, the husband his wife, the master his household, the brother his sisters; every one constructed his hut in a place apart from the rest, in order that he might live more at ease, and according to his own inclinations. A wood, a stream, a field, constituted the dominion of a Slavonian; and no unarmed person ventured to violate the sanctity of his domain—each family formed a little independent republic; and the ancient customs, common to the whole nation, served them instead of laws. On important occasions the different tribes assembled to deliberate on their common concerns; they consulted the old men, those living repositories of ancient usages, and they evinced the utmost deference to their advice. The same system was adopted when they required to elect a chief for one of their warlike expeditions; but such was their excessive love of freedom, and repugnance towards any kind of constraint, that they imposed various limitations on the authority of their chiefs, whom they often disobeyed, even in the heat of battle. After having terminated their expedition, every one returned to his home, and resumed the command of his children and household.

"That savage simplicity—that rudeness of manners, could not long endure. The pillage of the empire of the East, the centre of luxury and riches, made the Slavonians acquainted with new pleasures and hitherto unfelt wants. These wants, by putting an end to their solitary independence, drew closer the bonds of social dependence: they daily felt more strongly the necessity of mutual support; they placed their homes nearer each other; they began to build towns. Others, who had seen in foreign countries magnificent cities and flourishing villages, lost all taste for the obscurity of the forests, once endeared to their hearts by the love of independence; they passed into the provinces of Greece; they consented to range themselves under the rule

of the emperor. The fate of war placed, for a brief season, a large part of the German Slavonians under the government of Charlemagne and his successors; but an unconquerable love of freedom was ever the basis of their character. On the first favourable opportunity they threw off the yoke, and avenged themselves cruelly on their rulers for their transient subjection: they were never finally reduced to order but by the influence of the Christian religion."—Vol. i. p. 68, 69.

How strongly does this picture of the Slavonic race, a thousand years ago, recall the traces of the Poles of the present time! The same love of solitary and isolated freedom—the same passion for independence—the same fretting under the restraints of civilisation and the curb of authority—the source at once of their strength and their weakness—their glories and their ruin!

If it be true, as Shakspeare has told us, that the ruling passion is strong in death, no slight interest will attach to Karamsin's graphic picture of the character evinced in the supreme hour by the three races which have so long contended for the mastery of the East—viz.. the Tartars, the Russians or Slavonians, and the Turks.

"Cannons for a long time were not regarded by the Russians as a necessary part of the implements of war. Invented as they conceived by the Italian artists for the defence of fortresses, they allowed them to remain motionless on their carriages on the ramparts of the Kremlin. In the moment of combat, the Russians trusted more to their number than to the skill of their manœuvres; they endeavoured in general to attack the enemy in rear, and surround him. Like all Asiatic nations, they looked rather to their movements at a distance than in close fight; but when they did charge, their attacks were impetuous and terrible, but of short duration. 'In their vehement shock,' says Herberstain, 'they seemed to say to their enemy—Fly, or we will fly ourselves!' In war as in pacific life, the people of different races differ to an astonishing degree from each other. Thrown down from his horse, disarmed, and covered with blood, the Tartar never thinks of surrender: he shakes his arms, repels the enemy with his foot, and with dying fury bites him. No sooner is the Turk sensible he is overthrown, than he throws aside his scimitar, and implores the generosity of his conqueror. Pursue a Russian, he makes no attempt to defend himself in his flight, but neither does he ask for quarter. Is he pierced by lances or swords, *he is silent, and dies.*"—Vol. vii. p. 252.

These are the men of whom Frederick the Great said, you might kill them where they stood, but never make them fly.—"They were motionless, fell, and died!"

"Then shrieked the timid, and stood still the brave."

A devout sense of religion, a warm and constant sense of Divine superintendence, has in every age, from the days of

Rurick to those of Alexander, formed the ruling principle and grand characteristic of the Russians, as it has of all nations which have ever risen to durable greatness. Karamsin tells us that from the remotest period this has been the unvarying characteristic of the Slavonic race :—

"In the sixth century the Slavonians adored the *Creator of Thunder*—the God of the universe. The majestic spectacle of storms—at the moment when an invisible hand appears from the height of the burning heavens to dart its lightnings upon the earth—must ever make a deep impression alike on civilised and savage man. The Slavonians and Antes, as Procopius observes, did not believe in destiny; but, according to them, all events *depended on the will of a Ruler of the world.* On the field of battle, in the midst of perils, in sickness, in calamity, they sought to find the Supreme Being—by vows, by the sacrifice of bulls and goats, to appease his wrath. On the same principle, they adored the rivers and mountains, which they peopled with nymphs and genii, by whose aid they sought to penetrate the depths of futurity. In later times, the Slavonians had abundance of idols; persuaded that true wisdom consisted in knowing the name and qualities of each god, in order to be able to propitiate his favour. They were true polytheists, considering their statues not as images of the gods, but as inspired by their spirit, and wielding their power.

"Nevertheless, in the midst of these absurd superstitions, the Slavonians had an idea of a supreme and all-powerful Being, to whom the immensity of the heavens, dazzling with thousands of stars, formed a worthy temple; but who was occupied only with celestial objects, while he had intrusted to subaltern deities, or to his children, the government of the world. They called him 'Bilibos,' or the 'White God;' while the spirit of evil was named 'Tehermbog,' or the 'Black God.' They sought to appease the last by sacrifices: he was represented under the image of a lion; and to his malignant influences they ascribed all their misfortunes and miseries of life. The beneficent Deity they considered too elevated to be swayed by prayers or approached by mortals: it was the inferior executors of his will who alone were to be propitiated."—Vol. i. p. 99–102.

It has been already mentioned that the Russian empire was founded by Rurick in 862. And it is very remarkable that supreme power was obtained by that great warrior, not by the sword of conquest, but by the voluntary and unanimous will of the people.

"In Russia," says Karamsin, "sovereign power was established with the unanimous consent of the inhabitants; and the Slavonic tribes concurred in forming an empire which now has for its limits the Danube, America, Sweden, and China. The origin of the government was as follows:—The Slavonians of Novogorod, and the central districts around Moscow, sent an embassy to the Varegue-Russians, who were established on the other side of the Baltic, with these words—'Our country is great and fertile, but under the rule of disorder: come and take it.' Three brothers named Rurick, Sincori, and Trouver, illustrious alike by their birth and their great actions, escorted by a numerous body of Slavonians, accepted the perilous invitation, and fixed their abode, and began to assume the government in Russia,—Rurick at Novogorod; Sincori at Bich Ozero, near the Fins; and Trouver at Izborsk. Within less than two years, Sincori and Trouver both died, and Rurick obtained the government of the whole provinces which had invited

them over, and which embraced all the central provinces of Russia; and the feudal system was established over their whole extent."—Vol. i. p. 143, 144.

The Dnieper was the great artery of this infant dominion; at once their watery highroad, and no inconsiderable source of subsistence. It was on its bosom that the innumerable canoes were launched, which, filled with yellow-haired and ferocious warriors, descended to the Sea of Azoph, penetrated into the Black Sea, forced the passage of the Bosphorus, and often besieged Constantinople itself. In less than a century after its first origin, the Russian empire was already a preponderating power in the east of Europe. Before the year 950, the conquests of Oleg, Sviatoslof, and Vladimir, the successors of Rurick, had advanced its frontiers on the west to the Baltic, the Dwina, the Bug, and the Carpathian Mountains; on the south, to the cataracts of the Dnieper and the Cimmerian Bosphorus; on the east and north, to Finland and the Ural Mountains; and on the south-east nearly to the Caspian Sea; corresponding nearly to the boundaries of Russia in Europe at this time. The words of the Novogorodians, their allies, which the old annalist of Russia, Nestor, has transmitted, expressed the principle of the government of this vast empire, at this early period: "We wish a prince who will command and govern us according to the laws;" that is to say, as a limited monarchy.

Kieff was for centuries the capital of this rising dominion, its situation on the bank of the Dnieper being singularly favourable for the development of the resources of the empire. Of its strength and formidable character from the earliest times, decisive evidence is afforded by the three great expeditions which they fitted out against Constantinople, and which are recorded alike by the Greek and early religious annalists. Of the first of these, in 905, Karamsin has given us the following animated account:—

"In 905, Oleg, in order to find employment for his restless and rapacious subjects, declared war against the empire. No sooner was this determination known, than all the warlike tribes from the shores of Finland to those of the Vistula, crowded to the Dniester, and were ranged under the standard of Oleg. Speedily the Dniester was covered by 2000 light barks, each of which carried forty combatants. Thus 80,000 armed men descended the river, flushed with victory, and eager for the spoils of the imperial city. The cavalry marched along the banks; and soon the mighty host approached the cataracts of the Dnieper, which were of a much more formidable cha-

racter than they are now, when so many subsequent centuries, and no small efforts of human industry, have been at work in clearing away the obstacles of the navigation. The Varagues of Kieff had first ventured with two hundred barks to enter into the perilous rapids, and through pointed rocks and amidst foaming whirlpools had safely reached the bottom. On this occasion Oleg passed with a fleet and army ten times as numerous. The Russians threw themselves into the water, and conducted the barks, by the strength of the swimmers, down the rapids. In many places they were obliged to clamber up on the banks, and, seeking a precarious footing on the sharp ridges of rocks and precipices, often bore the barks aloft on their shoulders. After incredible efforts they reached the mouth of the river, where they repaired their masts, sails, and rudders; and boldly putting to sea, which most of them had never seen before, spread forth on the unknown waters of the Euxine. The cavalry marched by land, and though grievously weakened in number by the extraordinary length of the land journey, joined their fleet at the mouth of the Bosphorus; and the united force, 60,000 strong, approached Constantinople.

"Leon, surnamed the philosopher, reigned there; and incapable of any warlike effort, he contented himself with closing the mouth of the Golden Horn, or harbour of Constantinople; and secure behind its formidable ramparts, beheld with indifference the villages around in flames, their churches pillaged and destroyed, and the wretched inhabitants driven by the swords and lances of the Russians into the capital. Nestor, the Russian annalist, has left the most frightful account of the cruel barbarities committed on these defenceless inhabitants by the victorious warriors, who put their prisoners to death by the cruellest tortures, and hurled the living promiscuously with the dead into the sea. Meanwhile the Greeks, albeit numerous and admirably armed, remained shut up in Constantinople; but soon the Russian standards approached the walls, and they began to tremble behind their impregnable ramparts. Oleg drew up his boats on the shore, and putting them, as at the cataracts of the Dnieper, on the shoulders of his men, reached the harbour on the land side; and after launching them on its upper extremity, appeared with spreading sails, as Mahomet II. afterwards did, ready to land his troops behind the chain, and escalade the walls, on the side where they were weakest. Terrified at this audacious enterprise, the Emperor Leon hastened to sue for peace, offering to send provisions and equipments for the fleet, and to pay an annual tribute; and a treaty was at length concluded, on the condition that each Russian in the armament should receive twelve grionas, and heavy contributions should be levied on the empire for the towns of Kieff, Tchernigof, Polteck, Lubetch, and other dependencies of Russia."—Vol. i. p. 162–165.

When the imperial city, in the commencement of the tenth century, was assailed by such formidable bodies of these northern invaders, and its emperors were so little in a condition to resist the attack, it is not surprising that it should have been prophesied in that city nine hundred years ago, that in its last days Constantinople should be taken by the Russians. The surprising thing rather is, that in consequence of the lateral irruption of the Turks, and the subsequent jealousies of other European powers, this consummation should have been so long delayed as it actually has.

Passing by the two centuries and a half of weakness, civil warfare, and decline which followed the disastrous system of appanages, which are uninteresting in general history, we hasten to lay before our readers a specimen of the description Karamsin has given of the terrible effects produced by the Tartar invasions, which commenced in 1223. The devastation of that flourishing part of Asia which formerly bore the name of Bactriana and Sogdiana, is thus described :—

"Bokhara in vain attempted a defence against Genghis Khan. The elders of the town came out to leave the keys of the city at the feet of the conqueror ; but to no purpose. Genghis Khan appeared on horseback, and entered the principal mosque ; no sooner did he see the Alcoran there, than he seized it, and threw it with fury to the ground. That capital was reduced to ashes. Samarcand, fortified with care, contained 100,000 soldiers, and a great number of elephants, which constituted at that period the principal strength of the Asiatic armies. Distrusting even these powerful means of defence, the inhabitants threw themselves on the mercy of the conqueror, but met with a fate as cruel as if they had stood an assault. Thirty thousand were put to death in cold blood, a like number condemned to perpetual slavery, and a contribution of 200,000 pieces of gold levied on the town. Khiva, Tirmel, and Balkh, in the last of which were 1200 mosques, and 200 baths for strangers alone, experienced the same fate. During two or three years the ferocious wars of Genghis Khan ravaged to such a degree the wide countries stretching from the Sea of Aral to the Indus, that during the six centuries which have since elapsed, they have never recovered their former flourishing condition."—Vol. iii. p. 281, 282.

At length this terrible tempest approached the Muscovite plains. The first great battle between the Moguls and the Russians took place in 1226.

"Encouraged by a trifling success they had gained over the advanced-guard of the enemy, the Russians drew up their army on the left bank of the Kalka, and calmly awaited the approach of the enemy. Soon the innumerable squadrons of the Tartars appeared, and the intrepid Daniel, overflowing with courage, bore down upon the vanguard, broke it, and had wellnigh gained a glorious victory ; but the cowardly Polontsks could not stand the shock of the Moguls, and speedily turned their backs and fled. In the delirium of terror, they precipitated themselves on the Russians, penetrated their ranks, and carried the most frightful disorder into their camp, where the princes of Kieff and Tchernigof had made no preparations for battle, as Moteslaf, their general, who commanded the leading column, wishing to engross the whole honours of victory, had given them no warning of the approaching fight. Once broken, the Russians made but a feeble resistance : even the young Daniel was swept away by the torrent ; and it was not till his horse stopped on the brink of a stream which it could not pass, that he felt a deep wound which he had received in the commencement of the action. The Tartars, in continuing the pursuit to the banks of the Dnieper, made a prodigious slaughter of the flying Muscovites ; among others, six princes and seventy nobles were put to death. Never did Russia experience a more stunning calamity. A superb army, numerous, valiant,

animated with the highest spirit, almost entirely disappeared; hardly a tenth part of its numbers escaped. The base Polontsks, our pretended allies, joined in the massacre of the Russians, when victory had decidedly declared in favour of the Moguls. In the consternation which followed, the few Russian generals who survived threw themselves into the Dnieper, and destroyed all the boats on the river, to prevent the enemy from pursuing them. All but Moteslaf Romanevich, of Kieff, passed over: but that chief, who was left in a fortified camp on the summit of a hill, disdained to abandon his post, and actually awaited the whole fury of the Mogul onset. During three days, at the head of his heroic band, he repulsed all their efforts; and at length, wearied with a resistance which they saw no means of surmounting, the Mogul leaders proposed to allow him to retire with his troops, provided a ransom was given, which capitulation was agreed and sworn to on both sides. No sooner, however, had the perfidious Tartars by this device wiled the Russians out of their stronghold, than they fell upon them and massacred the whole, and concluded their triumph by making a horrid feast of their bloody remains."—Vol. iii. p. 289–291.

The immediate subjugation of Russia seemed presaged by this dreadful defeat; but the danger at the moment was averted by orders from Genghis Khan, who withdrew his forces to the south for an expedition against Persia. But the breathing-time was not of long duration. Before many years had elapsed, the Tartars returned flushed with fresh conquest under the redoubtable Bati. That terrible conqueror, the scourge of Russia, took and burnt Moscow, where the prince, who commanded, and the whole of the inhabitants, were put to the sword, without distinction of age or sex. City after city, province after province, fell before the dreadful invaders, who seemed as irresistible as they were savage and pitiless. Broken down into numerous little appanages, or separate principalities, the once powerful Russian empire was incapable of making any effectual resistance. Yet were examples not wanting of the most heroic and touching devotion, worthy to be placed beside the names of Astapa and Numantium.

"Bati sent a part of his troops against Souzdel, which made no resistance. As soon as they had entered it, the Tartars, according to their usual custom, put to death the whole population, with the exception of the young monks at Nuni, who were reserved for slavery. On the 6th of February 1238, the inhabitants of Vladimir beheld the dark squadrons of the Tartars, like a black torrent, surround their walls; and soon the preparation of scaling-ladders and palisades indicated an immediate assault. Unable to resist this innumerable army, and yet sensible that it was in vain, as the Moguls would massacre, or sell them all for slaves, the boyards and nobles, inspired with a sublime spirit, resolved to die as became them. The most heartrending spectacle followed. Vsevold, his wife and children, and a great number of illustrious nobles, assembled in the church of Notre Dame, where they supplicated the Bishop Metrophene to give them the 'tonsure monacale,'

which severed them from the world. That solemnity took place in profound silence. Those heroic citizens had bid adieu to the world and to life; but at the moment of quitting it they did not pray the less fervently for the existence of their beloved Russia. On the 7th of February, being the Sunday of the Carnival, the assault commenced,—the Tartars broke into the city by the Golden Gate, by that of Brass and that of St Irene. Vsevold and Moteslaf retired with their guards into the old town, while Agatha, the wife of Georges, the general-in-chief, his daughters, nieces, grand-daughters, and a crowd of citizens of the highest rank, flocked to the cathedral, where they were soon surrounded by the ferocious Moguls, who set fire to the building. No sooner did he perceive the flames, than the bishop exclaimed, 'O Lord! stretch out thy invisible arms, and receive thy servants in peace,' and gave his benediction to all around him. In fervent devotion they fell on their faces, awaiting death, which speedily overtook them. Some were suffocated by the volumes of smoke which rushed in on all sides, others perished in the flames or sank beneath the swords of the Tartars. The bloodthirstiness of the Moguls could not await the advance of the conflagration; with hatchets they burst open the gates and rushed in, eager for the treasures which they thought were hid in the interior. The cruel warriors of Bati made scarce any prisoners: all perished by the sword or the flames. The Prince Vsevold and Moteslaf, finding themselves unable to repel the enemy, strove to cut their way through their dense battalions, and both perished in the attempt."—Vol. iii. p. 344, 345.

Another instance of sublime devotion will close our extracts from the scenes of carnage :—

"After the destruction of Vladimir, the numerous Tartar bands advanced towards Kozilsk, in the government of Kalouga. Vassili commanded in that town, and with his guards and his people deliberated on the part which they should adopt. 'Our prince is still young,' exclaimed those faithful Russians: 'It is our duty to die for him, in order to leave a glorious name, and to find beyond the tomb the crown of immortality.' All united in this generous determination, resolving at the same time to retard the enemy as much as possible by the most heroic resistance. During more than a month the Tartars besieged the fortress without being able to make any sensible progress in its reduction. At length a part of the walls having fallen down under their strokes, the Tartars escaladed the ramparts; but at their summit they were met by a determined band of Russians, who with knives and swords disputed every inch of ground, and slew 4000 Tartars before they sank under the innumerable multitude of their enemies. Not one of that heroic band survived; the whole inhabitants, men, women, and children, were put to death; and Bati, astonished at so vehement a resistance, called the town 'the wicked city'—a glorious appellation when coming from a Tartar chief. Vassili perished, literally drowned in the blood of his followers."—Vol. iii. p. 549, 550.

And it is at the time when these heroic deeds are for the first time brought under the notice of the people of this country, that we are told that everything is worn out, and that nothing new or interesting is to be found in human affairs!

But all these efforts, how heroic soever, could not avert the stroke of fate. Russia was subdued, less by the superior skill or valour, than by the enormous numbers of the enemy,

who at length poured into the country four hundred thousand strong. For above two hundred and fifty years they were tributary to the Tartars, and the grand princes of Russia were confirmed in their government by the Great Khan. The first great effort to shake off that odious yoke was made in 1378, when Dmitri collected the still scattered forces of the appanages to make head against the common enemy. The two armies, each one hundred and fifty thousand strong, met at Koulikoff on the 7th September 1378, on which day, four hundred and thirty-four years afterwards, Napoleon and Kutusoff commenced the dreadful struggle at Borodino.

"On the 6th September, the army approached the Don, and the princes and boyards deliberated whether they should retire across the river, so as to place it between them and the enemy, or await them where they stood, in order to cut off all retreat from the cowardly, and compel them to conquer or die. Dmitri then ascended a mound, from which he could survey his vast army. 'The hour of God,' said he, 'has sounded.' In truth, no one could contemplate that prodigious multitude of men and horses; those innumerable battalions ranged in the finest order; the thousands of banners, and tens of thousands of arms glittering in the sun, and hear the cry repeated by a hundred and fifty thousand voices,—'Great God, give us the victory over our enemies!' without having some confidence in the result. Such was the emotion of the prince, that his eyes filled with tears; and, dismounting, he knelt down, and stretching out his arm to the black standard, on which was represented our Saviour's figure, he prayed fervently for the salvation of Russia. Then, mounting his horse, he said to those around,—'My well-beloved brothers and companions in arms, it is by your exploits this day that you will live in the memory of man, or obtain the crown of immortality.'

"Soon the Tartar squadrons were seen slowly advancing, and ere long they covered the whole country to the eastward, as far as the eye could reach. Great as was the host of the Russians, they were outnumbered considerably by the Moguls. His generals besought Dmitri to retire, alleging the duty of a commander-in-chief to direct the movements, not hazard his person like a private soldier; but he replied,—'No, you will suffer wherever you are; if I live, follow me; if I die, avenge me.' Shortly after, the battle commenced, and was the most desperate ever fought between the Russians and the Tartars. Over an extent of ten wersts, (seven miles,) the earth was stained with the blood of the Christians and Infidels. In some quarters the Russians broke the Moguls; in others, they yielded to their redoubtable antagonists. In the centre, some young battalions gave way, and spread the cry that all was lost: the enemy rushed in at the opening thus afforded, and forced their way nearly to the standard of the Grand Prince, which was only preserved by the devoted heroism of his guard. Meanwhile Prince Vladimir Andreiwitch, who was placed with a chosen body of troops in ambuscade, was furious at being the passive spectator of so desperate a conflict, in which he was not permitted to bear a part. At length, at eight at night, the Prince of Volhynia, who observed with an experienced eye the movements of the two armies, exclaimed,—'My friends, our time has come!' and let the whole loose upon the enemy, now somewhat disordered by success. Instantly they emerged from the forest which

had concealed them from the enemy, and fell with the utmost fury on the Moguls. The effect of this unforeseen attack was decisive. Astonished at the vehement onset, by troops fresh and in the best order, the Tartars fled, and their chief, Mamia, who from an elevated spot beheld the rout of his host, exclaimed, 'The God of the Christian is powerful!' and joined in the general flight. The Russians pursued the Moguls to the Metcha, in endeavouring to cross which vast numbers were slain or drowned, and the camp, with an immense booty, fell into the hands of the victors."—Vol. v. p. 79-82.

This great victory, however, did not decide the contest; and nearly a hundred years elapsed before the independence of Russia from the Tartars was finally established. Not long after this triumph, as after Borodino, Moscow was taken and burnt by the Moguls; the account of which must, for the present, close our extracts.

"No sooner were the walls of Moscow escaladed by the Tartars, than the whole inhabitants, men, women, and children, became the prey of the cruel conquerors. Knowing that great numbers had taken refuge in the stone churches, which would not burn, they cut down the gates with hatchets, and found immense treasures, brought into these asylums from the adjoining country. Satiated with carnage and spoil, the Tartars next set fire to the town, and drove a weeping crowd of captives, whom they had selected for slaves from the massacre, into the fields around. 'What terms,' say the contemporary annalists, 'can paint the deplorable state in which Moscow was then left? That populous capital, resplendent with riches and glory, was destroyed in a single day!' Nothing remained but a mass of ruins and ashes; the earth covered with burning remains, and drenched with blood, corpses half burnt, and churches wrapt in flames. The awful silence was interrupted only by the groans of the unhappy wretches, who, crushed beneath the falling houses, called aloud for some one to put a period to their sufferings."—Vol. v. p. 101.

Such was Russia at its lowest point of depression in 1378. The steps by which it regained its independence, and became again great and powerful, would furnish abundant subject for another article on Karamsin's Modern History.

We know not what impression these extracts may have made on our readers, but on ourselves they have produced one of the most profound description. Nothing can be so interesting as to trace the infancy and progressive growth of a great nation as of a great individual. In both we can discover the slow and gradual training of the mind to its ultimate destiny, and the salutary influence of adversity upon both, in strengthening the character and calling forth the energies. It is by the slowest possible degrees that nations are trained to the heroic character, the patriotic spirit, the sustained effort, which is necessary to durable elevation. Extraordinary but fleeting enthusiasm, the

genius of a single man, the conquests of a single nation, may often elevate a power like that of Alexander in ancient, or Napoleon in modern times, to the very highest pitch of worldly greatness. But no reliance can be placed on the stability of such empires; they invariably sink as fast as they have risen, and leave behind them nothing but a brilliant, and, generally, awful impression on the minds of succeeding ages. If we would seek for the only sure foundations of lasting greatness, we shall find them in the persevering energy of national character; in the industry with which wealth has been accumulated, and the fortitude with which suffering has been endured through a long course of ages; and, above all, in the steady and continued influence of strong religious impressions, which, by influencing men in every important crisis by a sense of duty, has rendered them superior to all the storms of fortune. And the influence of these principles is nowhere more clearly to be traced than in the steady progress and present exalted position of the Russian empire.

Of Karamsin's merits as an author, a conception may be formed from the extracts we have already given. We must not expect in the historian of a despotic empire, even when recording the most distant events, the just discrimination, the enlightened views, the fearless opinions, which arise or can be hazarded only in a free country. The philosophy of history is the slow growth of the opinions of all different classes of men, each directed by their ablest leaders, acting and reacting upon each other through a long course of ages. It was almost wholly unknown to the ancient Greeks: it was first struck out at a period when the recollections of past freedom contrasted with the realities of present servitude, by the mighty genius of Tacitus; and the sagacity of Machiavelli, the depth of Bacon, the philosophy of Hume, the glance of Robertson, and the wisdom of Guizot, have been necessary to bring the science even to the degree of maturity which it has as yet attained. But in brilliancy of description, animation of style, and fervour of eloquence, Karamsin is not exceeded by any historian in modern times. The pictures he has given of the successive changes in Russian manners, institutions, and government, though hardly so frequent as could have been wished, prove that he

has in him the spirit of philosophy ; while in the animation of his descriptions of every important event, is to be seen the clearest indication that he is gifted with the eye of poetic genius. Russia may well be proud of such a work ; and it is disgraceful to the literature of this country that no English translation of it has yet appeared. We must, in conclusion, add, that the elevated sentiments with which it abounds, as well as the spirit of manly piety and fervent patriotism in which it is conceived, diminish our surprise at the continued progress of an empire which was capable of producing such a writer.

THE HISTORICAL ROMANCE

[BLACKWOOD'S MAGAZINE, SEPT. 1845]

WE are constantly told that invention is worn out; that everything is exhausted; that all the intellectual treasures of modern Europe have been dug up; and that we must look to a new era of the world, and a different quarter of the globe, for new ideas or fresh views of thought. It must be confessed, that if we look to some parts of our literature, there seems too good reason for supposing that this despondING opinion is well founded. Everything, in some departments, does seem worked out. Poetry appears for the time wellnigh extinguished. We have some charming ballads from Tennyson, some touching lines from Miss Barrett; but where are the successors of Scott and Byron, of Campbell and Southey? Romance, in some branches, has evidently exhausted itself. For ten years we had novels of fashionable life, till the manners and sayings of lordlings and right honourables had become familiar to all the haberdashers' apprentices and milliners' girls in London. That vein being worked out, literature has run into the opposite channel. Action and reaction is the law, not less of the intellectual than the physical world. Inventive genius has sought out, in the lower walks of life, those subjects of novel study and fresh description which could no longer be found in the higher. So far has this propensity gone, so violent has been the oscillation of the pendulum in this direction, that novelists have descended to the very lowest stages of society in search of the new or the exciting. Not only have the manners, the selfishness, and vulgarity of the middle ranks been painted with admirable fidelity, and drawn with inimitable skill, but the habits and slang of the very lowest

portrayed with prurient minuteness, and interest sought to be awakened in the votaries of fashion or the Sybarites of pleasure by the delineation of the language and ideas of the most infamous wretches who ever disgraced society by their vices, or endangered it by their crimes.

"Whatever," says Dr Johnson, "makes the PAST, the DISTANT, or the FUTURE predominate over the present, exalts us in the scale of thinking beings." The words are familiar till they have become trite; but words are often repeated when the sense is far off. It is in the general oblivion of the thought of the philosopher, while his words were in every mouth, that the cause of the want of originality in modern works of imagination is to be found. The tendency to *localise* is the propensity which degrades literature, as it is the chief bane and destroyer of individual character. It is the opposite effect of engendering a disposition to expand, which constitutes the chief value of travelling in the formation of character. If the thought and conversation of individuals are limited to the little circle in which they live, or the objects by which they are immediately surrounded, we all know what they speedily become. It is in the extension of the interest to a wider circle, in the admission of objects of general concern and lasting importance into the sphere of habitual thought, that the only preservative against this fatal tendency is to be found. It is the power of doing this which forms the chief charm of the highest society in every country, and renders it in truth everywhere the same. A man of the world will find himself equally at home, and conversation flow at once with equal ease, in the higher saloons of London or Paris, of Rome or Vienna, of Warsaw or St Petersburg. But he will find it scarcely possible to keep up conversation for a quarter of an hour in the *bourgeois* circle of any of these capitals. It is the same with literature, and especially that wide and important branch of literature which, aiming at the exciting of interest or delineating of manners, should in an especial manner be guarded against the degradation consequent on a narrow restriction of its subjects to matters only of local concern.

The prodigious success and widespread popularity which have attended some of the most able novels of this new

school of romance in late years, as well as the great ability which their composition evinces, must not blind our eyes to the degrading tendency of such compositions upon the national literature. Immediate circulation, great profit to the bookseller, a dazzling reputation to the author, are by no means to be relied on as the heralds of lasting fame. In cases innumerable, they have proved the reverse. Still less are they to be considered as proofs that the writer, be his abilities what they may, has worthily performed his mission, or elevated himself to the exalted level of which his art is susceptible. The most pernicious romances and poems that ever appeared have often been ushered into the world by the most unbounded immediate applause : witness the *Nouvelle Heloïse* of Rousseau, and *Pucelle* of Voltaire. It was just their dangerous and seductive qualities which gave them their success. Rousseau knew this well. He addressed himself with skill and perfect knowledge of the age to its passions and vices :—" J'ai vu les mœurs de mon temps, et j'ai publié ces lettres," were the first words of his *Nouvelle Heloïse.* In the school we have mentioned, there is nothing immoral or improper ; but is there anything elevating or improving ? The true test of real excellence is not immediate success but durable fame ; it is to be found not in the popularity of circulating shops or reading clubs, but in the shelves of the library or the delight of the fireside. When a work suddenly attains great immediate celebrity in a particular circle or country, it is generally, though not always, an indication that it is not destined to enjoy any lasting reputation. The reason is, that it is addressed to local feelings, temporary passions, and particular desires ; and it rises to eminence from interesting or gratifying them. But that is not the way permanently to attract mankind. Nothing can do so but what is addressed to the universal feelings of our nature, and has penetrated to the inmost chords, which are common to all ages and countries. The touching them alone can secure durable fame.

Where now are all the novels portraying fashionable life with which the shops of publishers teemed, and the shelves of circulating libraries groaned, not ten years ago ? Buried in the vault of all the Capulets. Where will the novels portraying manners in the lowest walks of life be ten years

hence? He is a bold man who says they will be found in one well-selected library. We do not dispute the ability of some of these productions. We are well aware of the fidelity with which they have painted the manners of the middle class, previously little touched on in novels; we fully admit the pathos and power of occasional passages, the wit and humour of many others, the graphic delineation of English character which they contain. But, admitting all this, the question is—have these productions come up to the true standard of novel-writing? Are they fitted to elevate and purify the minds of their readers? Will the persons who peruse, and are amused, perhaps fascinated, by them, become more noble, more exalted, more spiritual beings, than they were before? Do not these novels, able and amusing as they are, bear the same relation to the lofty romances of which our literature can boast, that the Boors of Ostade, or the Village Wakes of Teniers, do to the Madonnas of Guido, or the Holy Families of Raphael? These pictures were and are exceedingly popular in Flanders and Holland, where their graphic truth could be appreciated; but are they ever regarded as models of the really beautiful in painting?

The doctrine now so prevalent is essentially erroneous—that the manners of the middle or lowest class are the fit object of the novelist, because they are natural. Many things are natural which yet are not fit to be exposed, and by the customs of all civilised nations are studiously concealed from the view. Voltaire's well-known answer to a similar remark when made in regard to Shakspeare, indicates, though in a coarse way, the true reply to such observations.

If everything that is natural, and we see around us, is the fit object of imitation, and worthy of being perpetuated in literature, it can no longer be called one of the *Fine* Arts. It is degraded to a mere copying of nature in her coarsest and most disgusting, equally as her noblest and most elevating aspects. We protest against the doctrine, that the lofty art of romance is to be lowered to the delineating the manners of cheesemongers and grocers, of crop-head charity boys, or smart haberdashers' and milliners' apprentices of doubtful reputation. If we wish to see the manners of such classes,

we have only to get into a railway or steamboat ; the sight of them at breakfast or dinner will probably be enough for any person accustomed to the habits of good society. Still more solemnly do we enter our protest against the slang of thieves or prostitutes, the flash words of receivers of stolen goods and criminal officers, the haunts of murderers and burglars, being the proper subject for the amusement or edification of the other classes of society. It might as well be said that the refuse of the common-sewers should be raked up and mixed with the garbage of the streets to form our daily food. That such things exist is certain ; we have only to walk the streets at night, and we shall soon have ample evidence of their reality. But are they the proper object of the novel-writer's pencil ? That is the question ; and it is painful to think that in an age boasting its intelligence, and glorying in the extent of its information, such a question should be deemed susceptible of answer in any but one way.

These two extremes of novel-writing—the Almacks and Jack Sheppard schools—deviate equally from the standard of real excellence. The one is too exclusively devoted to the description of high, the other of low life. The one portrays a style of manners as artificial and peculiar as that of the paladins and troubadours of chivalry ; the other exhibits to our view the lowest and most degraded stages of society, and by the force of humour or the tenderness of pathos interests us too often in the haunts of vice or the pursuits of infamy. It is easy to see that the one school was produced by the reaction of the human mind against the other ; genius, tired of the eternal flirtations of guardsmen and right honourables, sought for unsophisticated nature in the humour of low or the sorrows of humble life. But low and humble life are sophisticated just as much as elevated and fashionable ; and, if we are driven to a selection, we would prefer the artificial manners of the great to the natural effusions of the vulgar. We would rather, as the child said to the ogress, be eaten up by the gentleman. But true novel-writing should be devoted to neither the one nor the other. It should aim at the representation of what Sir Joshua Reynolds called "general or common nature"—that is, nature by its general features, which are common to

all ages and countries, not by its peculiarities in a particular circle or society. It is by success in delineating that, and *by it alone*, that lasting fame is to be acquired. Without doubt every age and race of men have their separate dress and costume, and the mind has its externals as well as the body, which the artist of genius will study with sedulous care, and imitate with scrupulous fidelity. But the soul is not in the dress; and so it will be found in the delineation of mind as in the representation of the figure.

All these extravagances in the noble art of romance originate in one cause. They come of not making "the past and the *distant* predominate over the present." It is like sketching every day from nature in the same scenery or country; the artist, if he has the pencil of Claude Lorraine or Salvator Rosa, will in the end find that if the *objects* of his study are endless, their *character* has a certain family resemblance; and that, if he is not repeating the same study, he is reproducing, under different forms, the same ideas. But let him extend his observation to a wider sphere; let him study the sublimity of mountain or the sweetness of pastoral scenery; let him traverse the Alps and the Apennines, the Pyrenees or the Caucasus; let him inhale the spirit of antiquity amidst the ruins of the Capitol, or the genius of Greece on the rock of the Acropolis; let him become imbued with modern beauty on the shores of Naples, or the combined charms of Europe and Asia amidst the intricacies of the Bosphorus—and what a world of true images, objects, and beauties, is at once let into his mind! It is the same with romance. It is by generalising ideas, by means of extended observation, that variety is to be communicated to conception, and freshness to incident; that the particular is to be taken from character, and the general impressed upon mind. But the novelist has this immense advantage over the painter—not only the present but the past lie open to his study. The boundless events of history present themselves to his choice; he can not only roam at will over the present surface of the globe, with all its variety of character, event, and incident, but penetrate backwards into the unsearchable depths of time. When will fresh subjects for description be wanting with such a field to the hand of genius? Never to the end of the

world ; for years as they revolve, nations as they rise and fall, events as they thicken around mankind, but add to the riches of the vast storehouse from which it is to select its subjects, or cull its materials.

Look at Shakspeare—with what felicity has he selected from this inexhaustible reserve, to vary his incidents, to invigorate his ideas, to give raciness to his characters! He has not even confined himself to English story, rich as it is in moving or terrible events, and strikingly as its moving phantasmagoria come forth from his magic hand. The tragedies, the comedies, the events, the ideas, of the most distant ages of the world, of the most opposite states of society, of the most discordant characters of mankind, seem depicted with equal felicity. He is neither thoroughly chivalrous like Tasso and Ariosto, nor thoroughly Grecian like Sophocles and Euripides, nor thoroughly French like Corneille and Racine. He has neither portrayed exclusively the manners of Arthur and the Round Table, nor those of the courts of the Henrys or the Plantagenets. He is as varied as the boundless variety of nature. Profoundly imbued at one time with the lofty spirit of Roman patriotism, he is not less deeply penetrated at another with the tenderness of Italian love. If Julius Cæsar contains the finest picture that ever was drawn of the ideas of the citizens of the ancient world, Juliet is the most perfect delineation of the refined passions of the modern. The bursting heart, uncontrollable grief, but yet generous spirit of the Moor—the dark ambition and blood-stained career of the Scot, come as fresh from his pencil as the dreamy contemplation of the Prince of Denmark, or the fascinating creation of the forest of Ardennes. It is hard to say whether he is greatest in painting the racked grief of Lear, the homely sense of Falstaff, or the aërial vision of Miranda. Here is the historical drama—here is the varied picture of the human heart ; and if the world is not prolific of Shakspeares, he at least has afforded decisive evidence of the vastness of the field thus opened to its genius.

The Historical Romance should take its place beside the plays of Shakspeare. It does not aim at representation on the stage ; it has not the powers of the actor, the illusion of scenery, the magic of theatrical effect, nor the charms

of music, to heighten its impression. But in exchange it has one incalculable advantage, which in the end is adequate to overbalance them all. It brings delight to the fireside. Seated in our arm-chairs, with the wintry winds howling around us, with our feet at our blazing fire, we are transported by the wand of the novelist to the most remote ages and distant countries of the earth. The lofty spirit and generous passions of chivalry, the stern resolves and heroic resolution of ancient patriotism, the graceful profligacy and studied gallantry of the court of Louis XIV., the deep Machiavelism of Italian perfidy, the blunt simplicity of German virtue, the freeborn fearlessness of English valour, the lofty soul and poetic imagery of the North American savage, the dauntless intrepidity of his Castilian conqueror, the heart-stirring pathos of Eastern story, the savage ferocity of Scythian conquest, may be alternately presented to our view. We roam at will, not only over space, but time; and if the writer is worthy of his high vocation, he can so warm the imagination by the interest of event, the delineation of character, the force of passion, or the charm of the pathetic, that the strongest impression of reality is conveyed to the reader's mind. Add to this the material appliances which are at his disposal; and which, though far inferior to mental power in rousing interest or awakening sympathy, have yet great effect in giving life to the picture, and transporting the imagination to the scenes or the ages which are intended to be portrayed. The scenery of all the different parts of the world, under every possible variety of light, colour, and circumstance; the manners, habits, and customs of all nations, and all ages, and all grades of society; the dresses, arms, houses, and strongholds of men in all stages of their progress, from the huntsmen of Nimrod to the Old Guard of Napoleon; the ideas of men in different classes and ranks of life in all ages, form so many additions to his pictures, which, if skilfully managed, must give them infinite variety and interest. There is no end, there never can be any end, to the combinations of genius with such materials at its disposal. If men, since this noble art has been created, ever run into repetition, it will be from want of originality in conception, not variety in subject.

The prodigious addition which the happy idea of the his-

torical romance has made to the stores of elevated literature, and through it to the happiness and improvement of the human race, will not be properly appreciated unless the novels most in vogue before the immortal creations of Scott appeared are considered. If we take up even the most celebrated of them, and those in which the most unequivocal marks of genius are to be discerned, it seems hardly possible to conceive how their authors could have acquired the reputation which they so long enjoyed. They are distinguished by a mawkish sensibility, a perpetual sentimentality, as different from the bursts of genuine passion as their laboured descriptions of imaginary scenes are from the graphic sketches which, in later times, have at once brought reality before the mind's eye. The novels of Charlotte Smith and Mrs Radcliffe belong to this school; they are now wellnigh unreadable. Even works of higher reputation and unquestionable genius in that age, the *Nouvelle Heloïse* of Rousseau, and *Sir Charles Grandison* of Richardson, now form a heavy task even for the most ardent lover of romance. Why is it that works so popular in their day, and abounding with so many traits of real genius, should so soon have palled upon the world? Simply because they were not founded upon a broad and general view of human nature; because they were drawn, not from real life in the innumerable phases which it presents to the observer, but from imaginary life as it was conceived in the mind of the composer; because they were confined to one circle and class of society, and having exhausted all the natural ideas which it could present, its authors were driven, in the search of variety, to the invention of artificial, and often ridiculous ones.

Sir Walter Scott, as all the world knows, was the inventor of the historical romance. As if to demonstrate how ill-founded was the opinion that all things were worked out, and that originality no longer was accessible for the rest of time, Providence, by means of that great mind, bestowed a new art, as it were, upon mankind, at the very time when literature, to all appearance, was effete, and invention, for above a century, had run in the cramped and worn-out channels of imitation. Gibbon was lamenting that the subjects of history were exhausted, and that modern story would never present the moving incidents of ancient, on the

verge of the French Revolution and the European war—of the Reign of Terror and the Moscow retreat. Such was the reply of Time to the complaint that political incident was worn out. Not less decisive was the answer which the genius of the Scottish bard afforded to the opinion, that the treasures of original thought were exhausted, and that nothing now remained for the sons of men. In the midst of that delusion he wrote *Waverley*, and the effect was like the sun bursting through the clouds. After a space, shorter than is usually required for a work of original conception to make its way in society, the effect began to appear. Like the invention of gunpowder or steam, it in the end worked a change in the moral world. Envy was silenced; criticism was abashed; detraction ceased to decry; malignity to deride. The hearts of men were taken, as it were, by storm. A new vein of boundless extent and surpassing richness was opened under our feet. Men marvelled that it had been so long of being found out. And the first discoverer worked it with such rapidity and success, that for long no one attempted to disturb him in the turning forth of its wealth.

It is curious, now that this great revolution in romance-writing has taken place, and is felt and acknowledged by all the world, to reflect on the causes, apparently accidental, by which it was brought about, and the trivial circumstances which might have turned aside, perhaps for ever, the creative mind of Scott from this its appropriate sphere of original action. The first chapters of *Waverley*, as we learn from Lockhart's Life, were written in 1808; but the work was laid aside in an unfinished form, and was almost forgotten by its author. It would probably have remained there overlooked and incomplete to the day of his death, had not the extraordinary popularity of Lord Byron's *Childe Harold*, and subsequent pieces, joined to some symptoms of waning public favour in the reception of his own later pieces, particularly *Rokeby* and the *Lord of the Isles*, awakened in his mind, as he himself has told us, a latent suspicion that he had better retire from the field of poetry before his youthful competitor, and betake himself to another career, in which hitherto no rival had appeared. Under the influence of this feeling of distrust in his poetical powers, the all but forgotten

manuscript of *Waverley* was drawn forth from its obscurity, the novel was finished, and given to the world in July 1814. From that moment the historical romance was born for mankind. One of the most delightful and instructive species of composition was created; which unites the learning of the historian with the fancy of the poet; which discards from human annals their years of tedium, and brings prominently forward their eras of interest; which teaches morality by example, and conveys information while giving pleasure; and which, combining the charms of imagination with the treasures of research, founds the ideal upon its only solid and durable basis—the real.

The historical romance enjoys many advantages for the creation of interest, and even the conveying of information, over history. It can combine, in a short space, the exciting incidents which are spread over numerous volumes; and, by throwing entirely into the background the uninteresting details of human events, concentrate the light of imagination on such as are really calculated to produce an impression. Immense is the facility which this gives for the creation of interest, and the addition of life, to the picture. What oppresses the historian is the prodigious number of details with which he is encumbered. As his main object is to convey a trustworthy narrative of real events, none of them can, with due regard to the credit of the narrative, be omitted. If they are so, it is ten to one that the author finds reason to repent his superficial survey before he has concluded his work; and if he is fortunate enough to escape such stings of self-reproach, he is quite certain that the blot will be marked by some kind friend, or candid critic, who will represent the thing omitted, how trifling soever, as a most important incident, the neglect of which is wholly fatal to the credit of the work as a book of authority. Every traveller knows how invariably this is the case with any object which may have been accidentally omitted to be seen in any province or city; and that the only way to avoid the eternal self-reproaches consequent on having it constantly represented by others as the most interesting object to be seen, is—at all hazards of time, fatigue, or expense—to see everything. But the historical novelist is fettered by no such necessity; he is constrained to encumber his pages with no inconsider-

able details. Selecting for the objects of his piece the most striking characters and moving incidents of the period he has chosen, he can throw full light upon them, and paint the details with that minuteness of finishing which is essential to conjuring up a vivid image in the reader's mind. He can give the truth of history without its monotony—the interest of romance without its unreality.

It was the power they enjoyed of abstracting in this manner from surrounding and uninteresting details, which constituted the principal charm of ancient history. The *Cyropædia* and *Anabasis* of Xenophon are nothing but historical romances. Livy's pictured page, Sallust's inimitable sketches, Tacitus's finished paintings, owe their chief fascination to the simplicity of their subjects. Ancient history, being confined to the exploits of a single hero or monarch, or the rise of a particular city, could afford to be graphic, detailed, and consequently interesting. That was comparatively an easy task when the events of one, or at most two, states on the shores of the Mediterranean alone required to be portrayed. But such a limitation of subject is impossible in modern history, when the transactions of Europe, Asia, Africa, and America, require to be detailed to render the thread of events complete. Even biography is scarcely intelligible without such a narrative of the surrounding nations and incidents as makes it run into the complexity and consequent dulness of history. But the author of historical romance is entirely relieved from this necessity, and, consequently, he can present the principal events and characters of his work in far more brilliant colours to his readers than is possible for the historian. Certainly with some the results of his more attractive influence will be doubted ; but, be that as it may, it is the Henry V. or Richard III. of Shakspeare that occur to every mind when these English monarchs are thought of, not the picture of them presented, able as it is, by Hume or Turner. If we hear of Richard Cœur-de-Lion, we immediately conjure up the inimitable picture of the crusading hero in *Ivanhoe* or the *Talisman*. Elizabeth of England is admirably portrayed in the pages of Hume, but the Elizabeth of *Kenilworth* is the one which is engraven on every mind ; and when the romantic tale and heroic death of Mary of Scot-

land are thought of, it is less the masterly picture of Robertson, or the touching narrative of Tytler that recurs to the recollection, than the imprisoned princess of the *Abbot*, or the immortal Last Sacrament of Schiller.

Considered in its highest aspect, no art ever was attempted by man more elevated and ennobling than the historical romance. It may be doubted whether it is inferior even to the lofty flights of the epic, or the heartrending pathos of the dramatic muse. Certain it is that it is more popular, and secures a much wider circle of readers, than either the *Iliad* or the *Paradise Lost.* Homer and Tasso never, in an equal time, had as many readers as Scott. The reason is, that an interesting story told in prose can be more generally understood, and is appreciated by a much wider circle, than when couched in the lofty strains and comparative obscurity of verse. It is impossible to over-estimate the influence, for good or for evil, which this fascinating art may exercise upon future ages. It literally has the moulding of the human mind in its hands ;—"Give me," said Fletcher of Saltoun, "the making of ballads, and I will give you the making of laws." Historical romances are the ballads of a civilised and enlightened age. More even than their rude predecessors of the mountains and the forest, they form those feelings in youth by which the character of the future man is to be determined. It is not going too far to say, that the romances of Sir Walter Scott have gone far to neutralise the dangers of the Reform Bill. Certain it is that they have materially assisted in extinguishing, at least in the educated classes of society, that prejudice against the feudal manners, and those devout aspirations for the blessings of democratic institutions, which were universal among the learned over Europe in the close of the eighteenth century. Like all other great and original minds, so far from being swept away by the errors of his age, he rose up in direct opposition to them. Singly he set himself to breast the flood which was overflowing the world. Thence the reaction in favour of the institutions of the olden time in church and state, which became general in the next generation, and is now so strongly manifesting itself, as well in the religious contests as in the lighter literature of the present day.

"Some authors," says Madame de Stael, "have lowered

the romance in mingling with it the revolting pictures of vice; and while the first advantage of fiction is to assemble around man all that can serve as a lesson or a model, it has been thought that a temporary object might be gained by representing the obscure scenes of corrupted life, as if they could ever leave the heart which repels them as pure as that to which they were unknown. But a romance, such as one can conceive, such as we have some models of, is one of the noblest productions of the human mind, one of the most influential on the hearts of individuals, and such as is best fitted in the end to form the morals of nations."* It is in this spirit that romance should be written—it is in this spirit that it has been written by some of the masters of the art who have already appeared, during the brief period which has elapsed since its creation. And if, in hands more impure, it has sometimes been applied to less elevated purposes; if the turbid waters of human corruption have mingled with the stream, and the annals of the past have been searched, not to display its magnanimity, but to portray its seductions; we must console ourselves by the reflection, that such is the inevitable lot of humanity, that genius cannot open a noble career which depravity will not attempt to debase, nor invent an engine for the exaltation of the human mind, which vice will not pervert to its degradation.

As the historical romance has been of such recent introduction in this country and the world, it is not surprising that its principles should as yet be not fully understood. It may be doubted whether its great master and his followers themselves have been fully aware of the causes to which their own success has been owing. Like travellers who have entered an unknown but varied and interesting country, they have plunged fearlessly on, threading forests, dashing through streams, traversing plains, crossing mountains, and in the breathless haste of the journey, and the animation of spirit with which it was attended, they have become, in a great degree, insensible to the causes which produced the charm that surrounded their footsteps. Yet, like every other art, the historical romance has its principles; and it is by the right comprehending and skilful application of these principles, that its highest triumphs are to be gained. They are the

* *Essai sur les Fictions.*

same as those which have long been unfolded by the great masters of composition in relation to poetry and the drama; they are to be found applied by Sir Joshua Reynolds to the sister art of painting. Yet are they not attended to by the great mass of readers, and even by authors themselves, if we may judge by their frequent failures, are little understood or frequently neglected.

The first requisite of the historical romance is a subject which shall be *elevated and yet interesting.* It must be elevated, or the work will derogate from its noblest object, that of rousing the sympathetic passions, and awakening the generous feelings; it must be interesting, or these effects will be produced in a very limited degree. Readers of romance look for excitement; they desire to be interested, and unless they are so, the author's productions will very soon be neglected. This is universally known and felt, alike by readers and writers; but yet there is a strange misapprehension prevalent among many authors, even of distinguished talent, in regard to the methods by which this interest is to be awakened. It is frequently said, that the public are insatiable for novelty; that all home subjects are worn out; and thence it is concluded, that whatever is new must possess the greatest chance of becoming popular. In the desire to discover such novelty, every part of the world has been ransacked. Stories from Persia and the East have been plentifully brought forward; the prairies and savages of North America have furnished the subjects of more than one interesting romance; Russia, Poland, Italy, Spain, as well as France, Germany, Sweden, and the United States, have been eagerly ransacked to satisfy the craving of a generation seeking after something new. The total failure of many of these novels, the dubious success of many others, though written with unquestionable talent, may convince us, that this principle of looking only for novelty may be carried too far, and that it is within certain limits only that the appetite for variety can successfully be indulged. And what these limits are, may be readily learned by attending to what experience has taught in the sister arts.

It has been said, and said truly, that "eloquence to be popular must be in advance of the audience, *and but a little in advance.*" The experience of all ages has taught, that

the drama is never successful unless it appeals to feelings which find a responsive echo in the general mind, and awakens associations of general interest in the breast of the audience. It is the same with the historical romance. It may and should deviate a little from the circle of interesting association generally felt; but it should be *but a little.* The heart of the readers of novels, as well as the spectators of tragedies, is at home. The images, the emotions, the loves, the hatreds, the hopes, the fears, the names, the places familiar to our youth, are those which awaken the strongest emotions of sympathy in later years. Novelty is frequently felt as agreeable; but it is so chiefly when it recalls again in other climes, or in the events of other ages, the feelings and passions of our own. We like occasionally to leave home; but when we do so, there is nothing so delightful as to be recalled to it by the touching of any of those secret chords which bind man to the place of his nativity, or the scene of his dearest associations. The novels which are to be durably popular in any country must be founded, not indeed necessarily on incidents of its own story, but on the ideas with which it is familiar, and on incidents cousin-german at least to those of its own national existence. The institutions of chivalry, the feudal system, have created, as it were, in this respect, one great family of the European nations, which renders, at least to the educated classes, the manners, emotions, and passions of the higher ranks an object of universal interest. We can sympathise as warmly with the paladins of Ariosto, or the knights of Tasso, as ever could the troubadours of Provence or the nobles of Italy. But if this lofty circle which forms the manners of chivalry is once passed, we descend to inferior grades of society. The novelist of every country will find, that what he portrays will not permanently or generally interest a wider circle than that of its own inhabitants. We can take no interest in the boyards of Russia or the boors of Poland; but little in the agas and kuzilbashes of Eastern story. Novelty, as in the *Arabian Nights*, may attract in youth for a single publication; but fairy or Eastern tales will never form the intellectual bread of life. The universal admiration with which *Don Quixote* and the Waverley novels are regarded over the whole

world, must not blind us to the extreme difficulty of making the manners of the middle or lower ranks, if brought forward as the main machinery of a romance, durably interesting to any but those to whom they are familiar. Even Scott and Cervantes owe great part of their success to the skill with which they have combined the noble manners and exalted ideas, engendered in the European heart by the institutions of chivalry, and as widely spread as its spirit, with the graphic picture of the manners in the different countries where the scene of their romances was laid. And it is not every man who can draw the bow of Ulysses.

Ivanhoe, the *Abbot*, and *Old Mortality*, may be considered as the perfection of historical romances, so far as subject goes. They all relate to events of national history, well known to all persons possessing any information in England and Scotland, and deeply connected with the most interesting associations to those of cultivated minds. The undaunted courage and jovial manners of the Lion-hearted hero; the cruel oppression of Norman rule; the bold spirit of Saxon independence; the deep sorrows and ever-doubtful character of the heroic Queen of Scots; the fearful collision of Puritan zeal with Cavalier loyalty, from which issued the Great Rebellion—are engraven on every heart in the British islands. They formed the most appropriate subjects, therefore, for the foundation or substratum of novels to be permanently interesting to the Anglo-Saxon race, with the addition of such imaginary characters or incidents as might illustrate still further the manners and ideas of the times. Nor are such subjects of universal and national interest by any means yet exhausted. On the contrary, many of the most admirable of these have never yet been touched on. The cruel conquest of Wales by Edward I.; the heroic struggles of Wallace against the same monarch; the glorious establishment of Scottish independence by Robert Bruce; the savage ferocity and heartrending tragedies of the wars of the Roses; the martyr-like death of Charles I.; the heartstirring conquests of Edward III. and the Black Prince; the heartless gallantry of the age of Charles II.; the noble efforts of the Highlanders in 1715 and 1745 for their hereditary sovereign, form a few of the periods of

British history, either not at all, or as yet imperfectly, illustrated by historical romance. Nor is the stock terminated; on the contrary, it is growing, and hourly on the increase. The time is already come when the heroism of la Vendée, the tragedies of the Revolution, form the appropriate subject of French imaginative genius; and the period is not far distant when Wellington and the paladins of the late war, transported from this earthly scene by the changes of mortality, will be fitting subjects for lasting and immortal place in the fields of romance.

The success of many of the novels of recent times, in the conception of which most genius has been evinced, and in the composition most labour bestowed, has been endangered, if not destroyed, by inattention to this principle in the choice of a subject. There is great talent, much learning, and vigorous conception, in the *Last Days of Pompeii* by Bulwer; and the catastrophe with which it concludes is drawn with his very highest powers; but still it is felt by every class of readers to be uninteresting. We have no acquaintance or association with Roman manners; we know little of their habits; scarce anything of their conversation in private: they stand forth to us in history in a sort of shadowy grandeur, totally distinct from the interest of novelist composition. No amount of learning or talent can make the dialogues of Titus and Lucius, of Gallius and Vespasia, interesting to a modern reader. On the other hand, the *Last of the Barons* is an admirably chosen historical subject, worked out with even more than the author's usual power and effect; and but for a defect in composition, to be hereafter noticed, it would be one of the most popular of all his productions. Great talent and uncommon powers of description have been displayed in Oriental novels; but they have not attained any lasting reputation—not from any fault on the part of the writers, but the want of sympathy in the great majority of readers with the subject of their compositions. Strange to say, we feel nothing foreign in James's *Attila*. So deeply are we impregnated with barbarian blood—so strongly have Scythian customs and ideas descended to our times—that the wooden palace of the chief of the Huns, surrounded with its streets of carts, and myriads of flocks and herds, in

the centre of Hungary, is felt as nothing alien. On the other hand, some of Sir Walter's later productions have failed, notwithstanding great ability in the execution, from undue strangeness in the subject. *Anne of Geierstein*, and the Indian story in the *Chronicles of the Canongate*, belong to this class; and even if *Robert of Paris* had not been written during the decay of the author's mental powers, it would probably have failed from the impossibility of communicating any of the interest of a novel to a story of the Lower Empire.

In this respect there is an important distinction between the drama and the historical romance, which writers in the latter style would do well to keep in view. Tragedy being limited in general to a very short period, during which events of the most heartrending kind are accumulated together, in order as strongly as possible to awaken the sympathy, or move the hearts of the spectators, it is comparatively of little importance where the scene is laid. Where the bones and muscles of the mind are laid bare by deep affliction, mankind in all ages and countries are the the same. The love of Juliet, the jealousy of Othello, are felt with equal force in all parts of the world. We can sympathise as strongly with the protracted woes of Andromache, or the generous self-immolation of Antigone, as the Athenian audience who wept at the eloquence of Euripides or the power of Sophocles. We feel the *Death of Wallenstein* to be as sublime as the Germans who are transported by the verses of Schiller; and they weep at the heroism of Mary Stuart with as heartfelt emotion as the people of Scotland, to whom her name is a household word. But it is otherwise with romance. It is occasionally, and at considerable intervals only, that these terrible or pathetic scenes are represented in its story, which sweep away all peculiarities of nation, age, or race, and exhibit only the naked human heart: nineteen-twentieths of its pages are taken up with ordinary occurrences, one half of its interest is derived from the delineation of manners, or the developing of character in dialogue, which exhibits none of the vehement passions; and the interest of the reader is kept up chiefly by the fidelity of the drawing, the spirit of the conversation, or the accuracy and brilliancy of the descrip-

tions. If these prove uninteresting from their being too remote from ordinary observation or association, the work will fail, with whatever talent or power its principal and tragic scenes may be executed.

In proposing as the grand requisite to the historical romance that the subject should be of an *elevating and ennobling kind*, we by no means intend to assert that the author is always to be on stilts, that he is never to descend to the description of low or even vulgar life, or that humour and characteristic description are to be excluded from his composition. We are well aware of the value of contrast in bringing out effect; we know that the mind of the reader requires repose, even from the most exalted emotions; we have felt the weariness of being satiated with beauty in the galleries of the Vatican or the valleys of Switzerland. Brilliants require setting, and bright light can be brought out only by proportional depth or breadth of shadow. If the novelist tries to keep up exalted sentiments or pathetic scenes too often, he will fall into the mistake of the painter who throws an equal light on all parts of his picture. Probably the rule which Sir Joshua Reynolds says he found by observation had been invariably observed by Titian—viz., to have one-fourth only of his picture in very bright light, one-fourth in deep shadow, and the remaining half in middle tint, may be equally applicable to the compositions of the novelist. But admitting all this—admitting further, that novels which deviate from the elevated standard may often attain a great temporary popularity, the greater, probably, owing to that very deviation—it is not the less true that the main object of the art should be to awaken generous and elevated feelings; and that in no other way than by attention to this object is durable fame to be obtained.

The celebrity arising from skill in the painting of low or vulgar manners, from power in the description of desperate or abandoned characters, how great soever it may be for a season, never fails to pass away with the lapse of time. Voltaire's romances, once so popular, are now nearly so much dead stock in the bookseller's hands; and the whole tribe of the licentious novelists of France prior to the Revolution are now read only by the licentious youth of Paris, and a

few prurient sensualists in other countries. It will be the same with Victor Hugo, Janin, and George Sand, in the next generation and in other countries. All their genius, learning, and pathos will not be able to save them from the withering effect of their accumulated horrors, shocking indecencies, and demoralising tendency.

Again, in the composition of the historical romance, the story should be *sufficiently simple*, and a certain degree of unity preserved in the interest and emotion which are to be awakened. It is not meant to be asserted by this that the novelist is to be confined strictly to unities like the Greek drama, or that the same variety, within certain limits, is not to be presented in the pages of romance, which we see every day around us in real life. All that is meant to be advanced is, that this variety must be confined within certain limits, if the interest of the piece is to be properly kept up ; and that it should be an especial object with the novelist to avoid that complication and intricacy of incidents which forms so formidable, though unavoidable, an addition to the difficulties of a historian. It is the more singular that romance writers should have fallen into this mistake that it is the very difficulty which stands most in the way of the interest of history, and the one which it is the peculiar advantage of their art to be able in a great measure to avoid. Yet it is the error which is most general in writers of the greatest ability in this department of literature, and which has marred or ruined the effect of some of their happiest conceptions. It has arisen, doubtless, from romance writers having observed the extreme multiplicity of incidents and events in real life, and in the complicated maze of historical narrative ; and thence imagined that it was by portraying a similar combination that romance was to be assimilated to truthful annals, and the ideal founded on the solid basis of the real. They forget that it is this very complication which renders history in general so uninviting, and acceptable (compared with romance) to so limited a circle of readers; and that the annals of actual events then only approach to the interest of fiction, when their surpassing magnitude, or the importance of the characters involved in them, justifies the historian in suspending for a time the thread of inconsiderable and uninteresting incidents, and throwing a broad and bright light,

similar to that of imagination, on the few which have been attended with great and lasting effects.

The great father of historical romance rarely falls into this mistake. The story, at least in most of his earlier and most popular pieces—*Waverley*, the *Antiquary*, the *Bride of Lammermoor*, *Old Mortality*, the *Abbot*, *Ivanhoe*, *Kenilworth*, *Quentin Durward*, and *Rob Roy*—is extremely simple; the incidents few and well chosen; the interest of a *homogeneous* kind, and uniformly sustained; the inferior persons and incidents kept in their due subordination to the principal ones. The subordinate characters of these admirable works, their still-life descriptions, and minor incidents, are grouped as it were around the main events of the story, and brought forward in such a way as to give variety while they do not detract from unity. It is impossible to conceive more perfect models of the historical romance, both in point of subject, conception, and execution, than *Ivanhoe* and the *Abbot*. In both, the subject is national and generally interesting—in both, the historical characters brought forward are popular, and connected with early associations—in both, the period chosen is one in which great national questions were at stake, and the conversations and characters afforded the means of bringing them prominently before the mind of the reader—in both, the incidents of the piece are few and simple; and the lesser plots or characters which they contain serve only to amuse the mind and give variety to the composition, without interfering with the unity of its general effect. How few and simple are the events in the *Bride of Lammermoor!* The tragedies of Sophocles do not exhibit a more perfect example of the preservation of the unity of emotion. Yet how interesting is the whole story—how completely does it carry along every class of readers—how well does every incident of moment prepare the mind for the dreadful catastrophe in which it terminates! How few are the incidents in the *Abbot*—how scanty the materials on which the story is built! A page riding from a castle in Dumfriesshire to Edinburgh, his introduction to the Regent Murray, and adventures during a few days in Holyrood, his attendance on the imprisoned Queen in Lochleven Castle, her escape from thence, and final overthrow at Langside—form the whole incidents out of which the web

of that delightful romance has been woven. Its charm consists in a great degree in the simplicity itself, in the small number of historic incidents it records, the interest of those incidents in themselves, and the room thereby afforded for working up all the details, and the minor plot of the piece, —the loves of the page and Catharine,—in perfect harmony with the main event, and without disturbing its development.

It were to be wished that later writers had followed the example thus set by the father of historical romance in the selection of their subject, and the construction of their plot. But, so far from doing so, they have in general run into the opposite extreme, and overlaid their story with such a mass of historical facts and details as has not only destroyed the unity of interest, but has in many cases rendered the story itself scarcely intelligible. Take two of the most popular romances of two justly celebrated living novelists, Sir E. L. Bulwer and Mr James—*The Last of the Barons,* and *Philip Augustus.* The period of history, the leading characters, and the subject of both, are admirably chosen ; and the greatest talent has been displayed in both, in the conception of the characters, and the portrait of the ideas and manners of the times which both present. But the grand defect of each, and which chills to a great degree the interest they otherwise would excite, is the crowding of historic incident, and complication of the story. Bulwer's novel is so crowded with rebellions, revolutions, and dethronements, that even the learned reader, who has some previous acquaintance with that involved period of English history, has great difficulty in following the story. Ample materials exist for two or three interesting historical novels in its crowded incidents. *Philip Augustus* labours equally plainly under the same defect. There is a triple plot going forward through nearly the whole piece; the story of the King and Queen, with the Papal interdict ; that of Prince Arthur Plantagenet and his cruel uncle, John of England ; and that of De Coucy and Isador of the Mount. No human ability is adequate to carrying three separate stories abreast in this manner, and awakening the interest of the reader in each. The human mind is incapable of taking in at the same time deep emotion of more than one kind. What should we say if Shak-

speare had presented us with a tragedy in which were brought forward scenes or acts about the ambition of Macbeth, the loves of Romeo and Juliet, and the jealousy of Othello? Assuredly, they would have mutually strangled each other. This is just what happens in these otherwise admirable novels; the complication of the events, and the variety of interests sought to be awakened, prevent any one from taking a strong hold of the mind. Rely upon it, there is more truth in the principle of the Greek unities than we moderns are willing to admit. The prodigious overpowering effect of their tragedies is mainly owing to the unity of emotion which is kept up. It bears the same relation to the involved story of modern romance which the single interest of the *Jerusalem Delivered* or *Iliad* does to the endless and complicated adventures of Ariosto's knights, or the sacred simplicity of the Holy Families of Raphael to the crowded canvass of Tintoretto or Bassano.

Perhaps the most perfect novel that exists in the world, with reference to the invaluable quality of unity of emotion, as well as the admirable disquisitions on subjects of taste and reflection which it contains, is Madame de Stael's *Corinne*. Considered as a story, indeed, it has many and glaring defects. The journey of Lord Nelvil and Corinne to Naples from Rome, is repugnant to all our ideas of female decorum; and the miserable sufferings and prostration of the heroine in the third volume, during her visit to Scotland, are carried to such a length as to leave a painful impression on every reader's mind. But abstracting these glaring errors, the conception and execution of the work are as perfect as possible. The peculiar interest meant to be excited, the particular passion sought to be described, is early brought forward, and the whole story is the progress and final lamentable result of its indulgences. The depths of that passion are revealed with a power and knowledge of the human heart which never was surpassed. But though the scene is laid in Italy, the love of Corinne is not that of southern Europe. It is not the sudden passion of Juliet for Romeo, the peculiar growth of that beauteous land, which is portrayed, but the refined attachment of northern Europe, which is taken in more by the ear than the eye, and springs from the sympathy of minds who have many

tastes and feelings in common. Nothing detracts from, nothing disturbs, this one and single emotion. The numerous disquisitions on the fine arts, the drama, antiquities, poetry, history, and manners, which the novel contains—its profound reflections on the human heart, the enchanting descriptions of nature and the monuments of Italy which it presents—not only do not interfere with the main interest, but they all conspire to promote it. They are the means by which it is seen the mutual passion was developed in the breasts of the principal characters; they furnish its natural history, by exhibiting the many points of sympathy which existed between minds of such an elevated cast, and which neither had previously found combined in an equal degree in any one of the other sex. It is in the skill with which this is brought out, and the numerous disquisitions on criticism, taste, and literature with which it abounds, rendered subservient to the main interest of the whole, that the principal charm of this beautiful work is to be found.

Another principle which seems to regulate the historical romance, as it does every other work which relates to man, is, that its principal interest must be sought in human passion and feeling. It appears to be the more necessary to insist on this canon, that the inferior appliances of the art—the description of manners, scenery, dresses, buildings, processions, pomps, ceremonies, and customs—has opened so wide a field for digression, that, by many writers as well as readers, they have come to be supposed to form its principal object. This mistake is in an especial manner conspicuous in the writings of Ainsworth, whose talents for description, and the drawing of the horrible, have led him to make his novels often little more than pictorial phantasmagoria. It is to be seen, also, in a great degree in James; who—although capable, as many of his works, especially *Mary of Burgundy*, *Attila*, and the *Smugglers*, demonstrate, of the most powerful delineation of passion, and the finest traits of the pathetic—is yet so enamoured of description, and so conscious of his powers in that respect, that he in general overlays his writings with painting to the eye, instead of using that more powerful language which speaks to the heart. It is no doubt a curious thing, and gives life

to the piece, to see a faithful and graphic description of a knight on horseback, with his companion, and their respective squires, skirting a wood, mounted on powerful steeds, on a clear September morning. The painting of his helm and hauberk, his dancing plume and glancing mail, his harnessed steed and powerful lance, interests once or even twice; but it is dangerous to try the experiment of such descriptions too often. They rapidly pall by repetition, and at length become tedious or ridiculous. It is in the delineation of the human heart that the inexhaustible vein of the novelist is to be found; it is in its emotions, desires, and passions, ever varying in externals, ever the same in the interior, that scope is afforded for the endless conceptions of human genius. Descriptions of still life, pictures of scenery, manners, buildings, and dresses, are the body, as it were, of romance; they are not its soul. They are the material parts of the landscape—its rocks, mountains, and trees; they are not the divine ray of the sun which illuminates the brilliant parts of the picture, and gives its peculiar character to the whole. The skilful artist will never despise them; on the contrary, he will exert himself to the utmost in their skilful delineation, and make frequent use of them, taking care to introduce as much variety as possible in their representations. But he will regard them as an inferior part only of his art; as speaking to the eye, not the heart; as the body of romance, not its soul; and as valuable chiefly as giving character or life to the period described, and repose to the mind in the intervals of the scenes of mental interest or pathos, on which his principal efforts are to be concentrated. Sections of external things often strike us as extremely brilliant, and give great pleasure in reading; but with a few exceptions, where a *moral* interest has been thrown into the representation of nature, they do not leave any profound or lasting impression on the mind. It is human grandeur or magnanimity, the throb of grief, the thrill of the pathetic, which is imprinted in indelible characters on the memory. Many of the admirable descriptions of still life in *Waverley* fade from the recollection, and strike us as new every time we read them; but no one ever forgot the last words of Fergus, when passing on the hurdle under the Scotch gate at Carlisle, "God save King *James!*" None

of the splendid descriptions in the chorusses of Æschylus produce the terrible impression on the mind which Sophocles has done by that inimitable trait, when in the close of *Antigone* he makes Eurydice, upon hearing of the suicide of her son Hæmon on the body of his betrothed, leave the stage *in silence*, to follow him by a violent death to the shades below.

The last rule which it seems material for the historical novelist to observe is, that characteristic or national manners, especially in middle or low life, should, wherever it is possible, be drawn from real life. The manners of the highest class over all Europe are the same. If a novelist paints a well-bred person in one capital, his picture may, with a few slight variations, stand for the same sphere of society in any other. But in middle, and still more in low life, the diversity in different countries is very great, and such as never can be reached by mere reading, or study of the works of others. And yet, amidst all this diversity, so much is human nature at bottom everywhere the same, that the most inexperienced reader can distinguish, even in the delineation of manners to which he is an entire stranger, those which are drawn from life, from those which are taken from the sketches or ideas of others. Few in this country have visited the Sierra Morena, and none certainly have seen it in the days of Cervantes, yet we have no difficulty in at once perceiving that Sancho Panza, and the peasants and muleteers in *Don Quixote*, are faithfully drawn from real life. Few of the innumerable readers of Sir Walter have had personal means of judging of the fidelity of his pictures of the manners and ideas of the Scotch peasants in his earlier novels ; but yet there is no one in any country who does not at once see that they have been drawn from nature, and contain the most faithful picture of it. It is the fidelity of this picture which gives the Scotch novels their great charm. It is the same with Fielding : his leading characters in low life are evidently drawn from nature, and thence his long-continued popularity. When Sir Walter comes to paint the manners of the middle classes or peasants in England, from plays, farces, and the descriptions of others, as in *Kenilworth*, *Woodstock*, *Peveril of the Peak*, and the *Fortunes of Nigel*, he is infinitely

inferior, and, in truth, often insupportably dull. His dialogue is a jargon mixed up of scraps and expressions from old plays or quaint tracts, such as no man on earth ever did speak, and which it is only surprising a man of his sagacity should have supposed they ever could. The same defect is more signally conspicuous in the dialogue of several of the historical romances of James.

It is the accurate and faithful picture of national character from real life, joined to the poetical interest of his Indian warriors, and his incomparable powers of natural description, which has given Cooper his great and well-deserved reputation. In many of the essential qualities of a novelist, he is singularly defective. His story is often confused, and awkwardly put together. Unity of interest is seldom thought of. He has no conception of the refined manners and chivalrous feelings of European society: though he has of late years seen much of it in many countries, he has never been able to become familiar with its ideas, or imbibe its spirit. His heroes, among the white men at least, are never anything above American skippers, or English subalterns or post-captains: his heroines have in general the insipidity which is, we hope unjustly, ascribed, with great personal charms, to the fair sex on the other side of the Atlantic. But in the forest, or on the wave, he is superb. His *Last of the Mohicans* and *The Prairie* are noble productions, to be matched with any in the world for the delineation of lofty and elevated character—the more interesting that they belong to a race, like the heroic age, now wellnigh extinct. He paints the adventures, the life, the ideas, the passions, the combined pride and indolence, valour and craft, heroism and meanness of the Red men, with the hand of a master. Equally admirable is his delineation of the white man on the frontier of civilisation—Hawkeye or Leather-stocking, with his various other denominations—who is the precursor, as it were, of European invasion, who plunges into the forest far ahead of his more tardy followers, and leads the roaming life of the Indian, but with the advantage of the arms, the arts, and the perseverance of the Anglo-Saxon. But he is strictly a national writer. It is in the delineation of Transatlantic character, scenes of the forest, or naval adventures, that his great powers are shown; when he comes to paint

the manners, or lay the seat of his conceptions in Europe, he at once falls to mediocrity, and sometimes becomes ridiculous.

Manzoni is an author of the highest excellence, whose celebrity has been derived from the same faithful delineation, from real life, of national manners. He has written but one novel, the *Promessi Sposi;* though various other works, some religious, some historical, have proceeded from his pen. But that one novel has given him a European reputation. It is wholly different in composition and character from any other historical romance in existence ; it has no affinity either with Scott or Cooper, Bulwer or James. The scene, laid in 1628, at the foot of the mountains which shut in the lake of Como, transports us back two centuries in point of time, and to the south of the Alps in point of scene. As might be expected, the ideas, characters, and incidents of such a romance differ widely from those of northern climes and Protestant realms. That is one of its great charms. We are transported, as it were, into a new world ; and yet a world so closely connected with our own, by the manners and ideas of chivalry, our once common Catholic faith, and the associations which every person of education has with Italian scenes and images, that we feel, in traversing it, the pleasure of novelty without the *ennui* of a strange land. No translation could give an idea of the peculiar beauties and excellences of the original. As might be expected, the feudal baron and the Catholic church enter largely into the compositions of the story. The lustful passions, savage violence, and unbridled license of the former, strong in his men-at-arms, castle battlements, and retainers ; the disinterested benevolence, charitable institutions, and paternal beneficence of the latter, resting on the affections and experienced benefits of mankind, are admirably depicted. His descriptions of the plague, famine, and popular revolt at Milan, are masterpieces which never were excelled. The saintlike character of Cardinal Borromeo, strong in the sway of religion, justice, and charity, in the midst of the vehemence of worldly passion and violence with which he is surrounded, is peculiarly striking. It is fitted, like Guizot's *Lectures on History,* to illustrate the incalculable advantage which arose, in ages of general rapine and unsettled govern-

ment, from the sway, the disinterestedness, and even the superstitions of religion.

But the greatest merit of the work is to be found in the admirable delineation of the manners, ideas, hopes and fears, joys and sorrows, of humble life with which it abounds. The hero of the piece is a silk-weaver named Renzo, near Lecco, on the lake of Como; the heroine Lucia, his betrothed, the daughter of a poor widow in the same village; and the story is founded on the stratagems and wiles of an unbridled baron in the vicinity, whose passions had been excited by Lucia's beauty, first to prevent her marriage, then to obtain possession of her person. In the conception of such a piece is to be seen decisive evidence of the vast change in human affairs, since the days when Tasso and Ariosto poured forth to an admiring age, in the same country, the loves of high-born damsels, the combats of knights, the manners, the pride, and the exclusiveness of chivalry. In its execution, Manzoni is singularly felicitous. He is minute without being tedious, graphic but not vulgar, characteristic and yet never offensive. His pictures of human life, though placed two centuries back, are evidently drawn from nature in these times: the peasants whom he introduces are those of the plains of Lombardy at this time; but though he paints them with the fidelity of an artist, it is yet with the feelings of a gentleman. His details are innumerable—his finishing is minute; but it is the minute finishing of Albert Durer or Leonardo da Vinci, not of Teniers or Ostade. In this respect he offers a striking contrast to the modern romance writers of France, Victor Hugo, Janin, Madame Dudevant, and Sue, by whom vice and licentiousness are exhibited with vast power, but in more than their native undisguised colours.

THE BRITISH THEATRE

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If the drama is the branch of composition which, by the common consent of man, requires the greatest effort of genius and intellectual power, scarcely less wonderful is the blending of the mental and physical qualities which the part of the performer requires. Acting, in its highest branches, is not merely a fine art—it is the combination of them all. The soul of poetry is its very essence; it is a thorough perception not merely of the obvious meaning, but of the secret spirit of the divine inspiration, which is its foundation. The mind of the actor must be sympathetic with that of the author—it must be cast in the same mould, and developed in some degree in the same proportions. Hence the remarkable force and beauty with which nearly all distinguished actors read poetry, and the extraordinary addition which their accent and intonation make to the effect of the most beautiful and best-known verses. When we hear the most familiar poetry read by a great performer, we feel as if we never understood it before, so vast is the impulse given, by the modulation of his voice, to its pathos and expression. A thorough acquaintance with the human heart, alike in its outward expression and inmost recesses, is not less indispensable: it is the knowledge of that which constitutes his chief power; it is its exhibition which gives rise to his greatest triumphs. The eye of a painter, the conceptions of a sculptor, are the basis of all that highly important part of the art which depends on the exhibition of external beauty, the arrangement of drapery, the exhibition of grace, the display of the witchery of expression and gesture. But vain is every such attempt,

if nature has not given to the performer the physical advantages which are the basis on which they must all rest; if the countenance has not the beauty which the eye of man never ceases to desire in woman; if the figure have not the proportions which the common consent of nations has stamped as the perfection of form. Even if all this rare combination is found in the same individual, their effect would be lost if an additional quality is wanting; for grace is the very soul of beauty on the stage, and it is its inexpressible charm—partly the gift of nature, partly the acquisition of study—which forms the chief element in the cestus which encircles the fascinating actress. The author rests on genius or intellectual power alone, and, strong in their might, he needs not the aid of physical qualities; but the stage, even more than oratory, requires the union of *both* for its greatest triumphs, and in its most perfect masters exhibits that rare combination of mental and bodily perfection which has ever formed the dream of ideal imagination, but is so rarely to be met with in actual life—

> "The youngest of the sister arts
> Where all their beauty blends.
> For ill can Poetry express
> Full many a tone of thought sublime,
> And Painting, mute and motionless,
> Steals but a glance of time.
> But by the mighty actor wrought,
> Illusion's perfect triumphs come;
> Verse ceases to be airy thought,
> And Sculpture to be dumb."

It is the extreme rarity of such a combination, either in man or woman, which is the cause of so few really *great* performers ever appearing on the stage of any country. England, in her long period of intellectual activity and success, can boast only three or four; France or Italy can hardly point to a greater number. Like the other fine arts, greatness on the stage generally appears in more than one individual at the same time, or nearly so; and the lustre of this constellation is succeeded by a long night of mediocrity or decline. It would appear to be a law of nature, to which there is no exception in the mysterious regulation of the life of nations, that the highest productions of genius can only be created by them *once;* that the

efflorescence of the general mind, in all the departments in which it is destined to attain perfection, takes place at the same time; and that the fruits of autumn are invariably succeeded by the desolation of winter, not less in the moral than in the physical world. It may be difficult to explain how it happens, but the most cursory acquaintance with history has impressed upon all thoughtful observers the melancholy conviction, that the corruption of taste invariably follows its perfection, and that the florid riches of the Corinthian order follow the manly proportions of the Doric, the simple grace of the Ionic, in other branches of literature, taste, and the fine arts, besides architecture. How long did the era of Pericles endure in Grecian—of Augustus, in Roman story? Where is now the immortal genius of Dante or Raphael, in Italy; of Camoens or Velasquez, in Spain? And when the present generation shall have gone to their graves, what traces will remain on the stage of Britain of the mighty genius of Garrick or Siddons; in France, of that of Talma and Mademoiselle Georges?

The thirst for novelty, the desire of change in the public, the variety of originality in artists, is the main cause of this downward progress. Like the Athenians, in the days of St Paul, highly civilised nations spend their time in the search of something new. Change is incessantly required, even though that change is from perfection to mediocrity. Great reputations become obnoxious from their very greatness: envy criticises, malice derides, mediocrity tires of them. Men weary of hearing men called the Just. This prevailing disposition of human nature may be observed in the perpetual changes of dress, furniture, and architecture, which are constantly going forward, apparently for no other reason but in order to make the new productions different from what the old had been. When the old were perfect, it may readily be conceived what the new must be. Variety, and the desire for praise in the artist, coincide with and foster this tendency in the public. Each one strives to strike out something new, in the hope of earning the praise of originality. Imitation of preceding greatness, or even the inhaling of its spirit, is deemed the indication of a little mind. Hence the invention of new orders in architecture, conspicuous only for their deformity; hence the

overloading of former ones with meretricious ornaments; hence the extravagance of Turner's colouring, after the once spotless style of Claude; hence the fantasy and horrors of the modern French drama, after the noble models of Corneille and Racine. To other arts beside architecture, the lines of Thomson are applicable—

> "First, unadorned
> And nobly plain, the manly Doric rose;
> The Ionic next, with decent matron grace,
> Her airy pillar heaved: luxuriant last
> The rich Corinthian spread her wanton wreath."

In addition to these sources of corruption common to the stage with all works of imagination, there are others peculiar to itself, which render the downward progress of that noble art more certain and rapid than any other. These are to be found in the adventitious aids which it derives from the extraneous but far inferior charms of scenery, music, dancing, and decoration. Immense is the danger, incalculable the degradation, which originates in this source. It is only the greater from the attractive nature, especially to the multitude, of those seductive allies to the naked majesty of thought. Every one knows how strongly they act upon the imagination—how powerfully they stimulate the senses—what a whirl of delightful sensations, for the moment at least, is produced by their combination. If any one doubts it, let him go to the opera of London, Paris, or Naples; his scepticism will probably not survive five minutes after their splendid exhibitions. But though the effect of these half imaginative, half physical displays, when the eye, the ear, and the imagination are alike entranced, is for the time irresistible, they are very different, on the retrospect, from the recollection of the noble pieces of the drama represented by the great masters of the histrionic art. They partake of the fleeting nature of sensual pleasure, so closely resembling, according to the beautiful image of the poet, flakes of snow falling on a wintry stream—

> "A moment white, then lost for ever."

But the noble lines of Corneille, recited by Talma—the dignified characters of Shakspeare, personated by Siddons—

the bewitching scenes of tenderness represented by Miss O'Neil, sink indelibly in the memory, for they are based on the spiritual and immortal part of our nature :—

> "Time but the impression deeper makes,
> As streams their channels deeper wear."

In every country, and in every age, there is a danger that music, dancing, and decoration will supplant tragedy—that the theatre will yield to the amphitheatre—the drama to the melodrama. The very composition of the words we have unconsciously used shows how the corruption takes place. The drama, the theatre, are the root, the origin ; but from it a very different production grows up. In truth, it is much to be feared that it is only in *one* stage of national progress that the taste for the legitimate drama is prevalent, and that that period, like that of national greatness, genius, or purity of taste, is generally very brief. It is the period when elevated and heroic feelings have not yet lost their ascendency, but the stern realities of war, from which they took their rise, have given place, in a numerous class, to the arts of imagination, the tastes of peace. Grandeur of thought then must have vent, for it exists in the public mind ; but the period of action has passed, it finds it only in the charms of fiction or the magic of representation. The age of Pericles succeeding the struggle of the Persian war—of Augustus, following the Roman conquest of the world—of Ariosto and Tasso, consequent on the expiring exploits, but yet vivid dreams of chivalry—of Shakspeare, after the mighty heave of the Reformation—of Corneille, contemporary with the glories of Louis XIV.—of Scott and Schiller, coeval with the fervour of the French Revolution, all denote one and the same stage in the national mind. "In the infancy of a state," says Bacon, "arms prevail ; in the middle age, arms and learning, *for a short season ;* in the decline, commerce and the mechanical arts." It is during this "*short* season" that the drama, whether in composition or representation, rises to perfection ; it is in the long period of decline, when "commerce and the mechanical arts" form the common objects of pursuit, that it gives place to the attractions of the melodrama, because man has degenerated into a sensual being.

The romantic drama of modern times has augmented this degrading tendency, because it has at once superseded the

necessity of mental power, and introduced the aid of sensual attraction. The simple and stern drama of antiquity admitted of scarcely any aid from the exhibitions of the melodrama. Where there was no change of scene, little deviation from time, no dancing, and three or four characters only in the piece, it was impossible to captivate by the mere phantasmagoria of theatrical display. The recitation of the chorus, the only aid extraneous to the genius of the poet it admitted, mainly rested for its effect on the beauty of lyrical poetry, the magic of association derived from the events referred to. Everything depended on the poet and the actors, and on them alone. The dramatist was a naked gladiator with the sword of genius in his hand; if he could not wield it, he was lost. But the romantic drama has introduced a very different and much more easy field for exertion. The poet and the actor do not descend into it alone, but with a host of allies to sustain their sinking arms. The melody of music, the attractions of dancing, gorgeous displays of dresses, voluptuous exhibitions, processions, and decorations, frequent changes of scene, beautiful representations of nature, the clash of arms, the rolling of drums, the clang of trumpets, the excitement of combat, are freely called in to aid the exertions of thought, to compensate the eloquence of passion. A long continued story is told—the interest of a romance is attempted to be awakened by the exhibition of its chief scenes on the stage—everything that painting, music, and even place furnish, are called in to interest the audience. Great, at times, is the effect of this combination; it has not been disdained by the highest genius. Witness the last scenes of *Macbeth*, the scaffold scene in *Venice Preserved*. But such aids are dangerous, for they lead the mind to depend on something foreign to itself. They are the bladders on which mediocrity is sometimes supported on the waves; but it is on his own arm, not foreign aid, that the athletic swimmer depends.

The admission of a lower and less instructed class into the great theatres, in consequence of the increase of wealth and population, has had a powerful effect in augmenting this degrading tendency in the public mind. Even in the time of Voltaire it had become a subject of complaint to that great critic and tragedian, that the class of men who, in the

time of Corneille, habitually attended the theatre, no longer did so; that the noble sentiments, the statesman-like reflections with which his writings abound, were in consequence abandoned; that women constituted the majority everywhere, and gave the tone to everything, and that they would tolerate nothing but love.* But if this was true in Voltaire's time, how much more is it the case at this time, and in this country! The class of persons who frequent the theatre has entirely changed in the last half century. In the early days of George III., the king and queen went once a-week to Drury Lane or Covent Garden; of course the nobility and fashionable world did the same. Garrick was the habitual and intimate friend of Burke, Johnson, and Reynolds; Mrs Siddons, the frequent and valued guest of royalty; she first detected the mental malady which spread such a gloom at intervals over the reign of her able and upright sovereign. Now Covent Garden and Drury Lane, deserted by the nobility, except when they resound to the strains of Italian melody, seldom visited, and then only for form's sake, by the sovereign, have been driven, in self-defence, to exhibitions of music and dancing. The tragic muse no longer is heard within their walls; the first has become a concert room, the second an opera-house.

It is not surprising that this change has taken place. The class who frequent and support the theatres has undergone a total alteration during the last thirty years. Instead of the first in rank and the first in talent—instead of the wits and beauties of the day, the theatres are crowded by a motley assemblage of strangers, foreigners, youths, and Cyprians. Twenty thousand of the first class, who are on an average every evening, in the metropolis, constitute the main support of the drama; their number is swelled, when parliament is sitting, and a railway mania rages, to eighty or a hundred thousand. It is needless to say what description of ladies so prodigious an influx of young men, generally with little to do, and much money in their pockets, attracts to the saloons and boxes of the theatres. Equally clear is it that stimulants to the senses constitute the great object of desire to those classes. Elegant women, beautiful dancing, voluptuous music, will carry the day with them before the

* "Commentaires sur Corneille," *Cinna*, Note to Act 1, scene 1.

majesty of Siddons, the dignity of Kemble, the pathos of Helen Faucit, the learning of Macready. The degradation of the stage is in great part the consequence, it is to be feared unavoidable, of the prodigious increase in wealth and population which has taken place in the empire during the last thirty years; and of the unparalleled augmentation of private business before the legislature since the Reform Act, which has attracted so vast a multitude of ill-educated strangers to the metropolis, during the most important months in the year.

In truth, the present depressed situation of the legitimate drama in Great Britain, is, it is much to be feared, in reality owing to a more general cause, inherent in the present state of society, and for which, without an entire revolution in ideas, habits, and institutions, it is hardly possible to see a remedy. This is the progressive, and now general rise of the middle and lower ranks into circumstances of comfort, and the advantages of education, which it is the deserved boast of modern civilisation to have effected. The theatres are now filled with a class who, though instructed to a certain degree, have not, and cannot possess, the refined and classical education, which is necessary to a due appreciation of excellence in the productions of the drama. The very names of the persons are unknown to them. Agamemnon, Clytemnestra, Iphigenia, Achilles, Antigone, Pompey, Cassius. Hecuba, Nero, Britannicus, Junia, Bajazet, Zaïre, Godfrey of Bouillon, Rinaldo, and the like, at which the heart of every scholar and really educated person of both sexes throbs, are to those men long and unknown names. They are like the titles of Hindoo rajahs or Persian princes, in general so tiresome and perplexing to a European reader. What the numerous inmates of the theatre require is not any incidents founded on the history of such remote, and, to them, unknown times, but something rousing to the imagination, and stimulating to the senses, which all, in consequence, can understand.

When the majority of the play-going public come to belong to this class, from its rise in affluence and importance, the last hour of the legitimate drama, in that country at least, has struck. Dancing, processions, scenery, voluptuousness will prove more lucrative to the manager, and, therefore, speedily supersede power and sentiment in the poet,

genius or versatility in the performers. The highly-educated ranks, dissatisfied with the prevalence of such meretricious aids on the boards, will gradually drop off, and leave the theatre entirely in the hands of the middle and lower classes, who, though in fact affluent and able to maintain it, are not sufficiently refined in their ideas to keep it up in its proper sphere. We see this every day in London, where, while the native theatres are almost all abandoned to the melodrama, the correct drama is nearly confined to the Italian opera and the French play, where the use of a foreign language practically confines the audience to the highly-educated classes.

The stage has one peculiar and melancholy feature, which belongs to it alone of all the fine arts. The efforts of the performer perish in the moment of creation. If they are more exciting and overpowering than the productions of genius in any other department, they are also more evanescent; if they combine, in one enchanting form, all that taste and talent have achieved in all the other arts, they expire in the midst of the delight they have produced. Music itself is less fleeting. The genius of the composer has breathed the soul of harmony into his pieces. The mighty conceptions of Handel, the bewitching melody of Mozart, the varied beauties of Rossini, will captivate mankind to the end of the world. The skill of the vocalist, the taste of the performer, are heard no more, indeed, when their strains are over; but the music remains, and another artist, a second orchestra, will recall again the first divine illusions. But who is to recall, what perpetuate, the noble conceptions of the actor? The generation who have witnessed them will retain, indeed, their inimitable perfection indelibly engraven on their memory; but how is their impression to be conveyed to future ages? How is the look, the voice, the gesture, the accents of love, the step of grace, the glance of indignation, the cry of despair which thrills every heart which witnessed it, to be perpetuated? How is a conception of it even to be conveyed to future ages? Alas! it is impossible. It is too ethereal to be seized by mortal hands; it is too spiritual to be apprehended by earthly bonds. Like the ravishing sounds which steal upon the ear when the light zephyr sweeps over the chords

of the Æolian harp, it sinks into the heart, but lives only in the secret cells of the memory.

Notwithstanding this difficulty, it is possible, by writing, to convey some idea of the distinctive character of great performers. It is so, because every civilised age has, and ever will have, the stage, and therefore every one has some model—inferior, perhaps, but still a model—which he has witnessed, which aids him in embodying the conceptions which the writer wishes to convey. The same difficulty exists, though in a much lesser degree, in the description of scenery. If the reader has beheld no scenes in nature of the same kind, the most glowing language, the most graphic details, will fail in conveying any distinct or correct conception of them. He will think he is conceiving new scenes, when, in fact, he is only repeating old ones. But if he has seen some objects of the *same class*, though inferior in magnitude or effect, he will be able, from an accurate description of the leading features of a scene, to convey some idea of what the writer intends to convey. Thus, whoever has seen the Alps will have no difficulty in forming a conception of Lebanon or the Andes from the glowing pages of Lamartine or Humboldt; and the rush of Schaffhausen will enable the imagination even of those who have never crossed the Atlantic, to figure the thunder of Niagara. It is in the hope that similar aids may assist the feeble efforts of the pen, that the following attempt is made to give a picture of the great tragic performers of the last and the present age.

Of Garrick all have heard; but none of the present generation have seen him, and it is the more advanced in years only who have received accounts of his extraordinary talents from eyewitnesses. They were undoubtedly, however, of the very highest description. The estimation in which he was held by the greatest men of his own, not the least of any age, sufficiently proves this. The companion of Johnson and Burke, of Goldsmith and Reynolds, of Fox and Gibbon, must have been no common man, independent altogether of his theatrical abilities. Like all persons of the highest class of intellect, his talents were not confined to his own profession; they shone out in every department of thought. He was as great at the supper of the literary club, when in presence of the eloquence of Burke, or the

gladiatorial powers of Johnson, as when he entranced the audience at Covent Garden or Drury Lane. Those who enjoyed his friendship, spoke in the highest terms of his conversational powers, as well as the varied subjects of information which exercised his thoughts, and the simple and amiable turn of his mind.

As an actor, his most remarkable quality was his versatility. He had few advantages from nature. His figure, though not actually diminutive, was neither tall nor commanding; his countenance was far from being cast in the antique mould, his voice neither remarkably sonorous nor powerful; but all these deficiencies were supplied, and more than supplied, by the energy of his mind and the incomparable powers of observation which he possessed. There never was such a delineation, at once of the tragic and comic passions. He united the eye of Hogarth for the ludicrous, and that of Salvator for the terrible; that of Caracci for the pathetic, and that of Velasquez for the dignified. It was this close observation of nature which constituted his great power, and enabled him to wield at will, and with such surprising effect, the magic wand which swayed the feelings of his audience, alternately rousing them to the highest exaltation of the tragic, and the utmost stretch of the comic passions. This peculiar faculty, however, had its disadvantages; it made him fond of stage effect, and condescend to trick. He performed Lear *on crutches*, to add to the effect of the great scene, when he threw them away. It is difficult to conceive how such a combination can exist in the same individual; and certainly experience affords very few instances of a similar union. But the examples of Shakspeare and Sir Walter Scott prove that such a blending of apparently heterogeneous qualities may be found in the most highly-gifted dramatic poets. Napoleon's celebrated saying, "from the sublime to the ridiculous is but a step," may possibly afford, in a certain degree, a key to the mystery. And the peculiarity was probably founded, in both, on the same accurate eye for the working of the human heart, and power of graphic delineation, which, alike in the poet and the performer, is the foundation of dramatic excellence.

A most competent eyewitness has left the following

graphic picture of the wonderful power of imitating the expression of human passion which Garrick possessed. In the chapter in which Fielding describes the behaviour of Partridge at the theatre, he says,—

"Partridge, upon seeing the ghost in Hamlet, gave that credit to Mr Garrick which he had denied to Jones, and fell into so violent a fit of trembling that his knees knocked together. Jones asked him what was the matter, and whether he was afraid of the warrior upon the stage.

"'Oh, sir,' he exclaimed, 'I perceive now it is what you told me. I am not afraid of anything, for I know it is but a play; and even if it was really a ghost, it could do no harm at such a distance and in so much company; and yet, if I was frightened, I am not the only person.'

"'Why, who,' cried Jones, 'dost thou take to be such a coward here besides thyself?'

"'Nay, you may call me a coward if you will; but *if that little man on the stage there is not frightened, I never saw any man frightened in my life.*'

"He sat with his eyes partly fixed on the ghost, and partly on Hamlet, and with his mouth open. The same passions which succeeded each other in Hamlet, succeeded each other also in him.

"At the end of the play, Jones asked him which of the players he liked best. To this he answered, with some appearance of indignation at the question—

"'The king, without doubt.'

"'Indeed, Mr Partridge,' says Mr Miller, 'you are not of the same opinion as the rest of the town, for they are all agreed that Hamlet is acted by the best player who ever was on the stage.'

"'He the best player!' cries Partridge, with a contemptuous sneer. 'Why, I could act as well as he myself. I am sure, if I had seen a ghost, *I should have looked in the very same manner, and done just as he did.* And then, to be sure, in that scene, as you call it, between him and his mother, where you told me he acted so fine, why any man—that is, any good man—that had such a mother, would have done exactly the same. I know you are only joking with me; but although, madam, I never was at a play in London, yet I have seen acting before in the country, and the king for my money. He spoke all his words distinctly, and half as loud again as the other. Anybody may see he is an actor.'"

It is impossible to imagine a finer compliment to the superlative skill of the actor which personated nature so exactly, that it was mistaken by the countryman for it.

If nature had done little, comparatively speaking, for Garrick, except endowing him with these wonderful powers, the same cannot be said of the majestic actress who, after him, sustained the dignity of the British stage. Mrs Siddons was born a great tragedian. Every quality, physical and mental, requisite for the formation of that character, appears to have been combined in that wonderful woman. A noble countenance, cast in the finest Roman model; dark eyes and eyebrows; a profusion of black hair; a lofty figure and majestic mien; a powerful and sonorous, but yet melo-

dious voice, were the advantages which nature gave her to follow out her elevated destiny. Her mind corresponded with this dignified exterior. It was essentially heroic. Sir Joshua Reynolds' noble picture of her, seated in the old English arm-chair, as the Muse of Tragedy, embodies the finest conception of her character. She had not the quickness of Garrick's observation, the marvellous versatility of his powers. There was a certain degree of sameness in all her representations; but it was the sameness of the Iliad or the Paradise Lost. Her mind appeared to be so elevated that she could personate, in perfection at least, none but lofty and heroic character. Like Corneille, she could not descend to common life; the heroine was ever apparent. In private society, she was stately and unbending; her most intimate friends could scarcely approach her without awe. She had no playfulness of disposition, no *abandon* about her; the tragedy queen was ever apparent. But she portrayed to perfection the passions of that character. The world had never seen—perhaps it will never again see—anything comparable to her delineation of female characters of a lofty and dignified cast on the British stage. Queen Constance, Lady Macbeth, Mrs Haller, Jane Shore, and others of that description, were those which suited her best; and the softening of such characters by suffering, or their rousing by ambition, were exhibited by her with the utmost power of the tragic art.

It was not in these characters only, however, that Mrs Siddons excelled. Nature had apparently intended her for them; but her genius caused her to embrace a wider range. Belvidera, Desdemona, Juliet, Cordelia, Ophelia, Mrs Beverley, were also constantly acted by her, and with never-failing effect. But this effect arose from her perfect command of tragic emotion; it was in the terrible, not the winning, scenes that she was supremely great. She was too dignified, too proud, too lofty, to personate the attractive with entire success. None could fail to admire, but scarce any could think of loving her. The man who ventured to do so would have expected to be withered by a glance. You might as well have thought of falling in love with a queen on the throne. It was when the characters she represented were broken by suffering, that her astonishing powers shone forth

in their full lustre. Thus it was not Juliet charming all the world by the grace of her movements in the masquerade, or her tenderness in the balcony scene, but Juliet contemplating with horror her resurrection amidst her ancestors' bones, or expiring in the arms of Romeo, in front of the tomb of the Capulets, which riveted every eye, and melted every heart in the audience. It was not Belvidera persuading Jaffier to betray his comrades, by the witchery of all-powerful love, but Belvidera when she hears the fatal bell toll on the scaffold, or where she goes mad at the recital of the tragic scene which then ensued, which is indelibly imprinted on the recollection of all who witnessed it. But when she did come to the scenes of woe, Mrs Siddons was marvellously powerful. Inaccessible to the softer, she seems to have felt the full force of the sterner passions. The thrill of horror, the wail of anguish, the maniac cry of madness, were represented by her with inimitable effect. Her scream, when in Belvidera she fell on her knees, and said, "I'll dig!" can never be forgotten by any who heard it. At the distance of five-and-thirty years, it is as present to the memory as the first moment the words were uttered.

Although Mrs Siddons constantly acted the tragic characters in Shakspeare, she was not altogether Shakspearian in her ideas. Her mien was too dignified, her figure too commanding, her mind too lofty, to embrace the *variety* of characters which floated into the mind of the bard of Avon. It would be unjust to say she was always on stilts, for she often thrilled every heart when she came off them; but she was on them sufficiently often to impress that as the general character of her mind. The Greek drama would have suited her better than the romantic. She would have made a noble Antigone, and personated to perfection the daughter of Agamemnon. Albeit born in England, and nursed from her infancy to the study of the romantic drama, she seemed to have embraced more closely the spirit of Corneille than of Shakspeare in her acting. France never produced anything comparable to the genius with which she would have represented the heroines of Cinna, the Cid, or Polyeucte. She would have made a great Zaïre or Alzire; but the tenderness of Racine would have failed in her hands. Garrick was superior to her in observation of nature—greatly so in

versatility of genius; but he was far inferior in the delineation of passion in great and heroic minds. That she took from nature; but it was nature seen through the medium of her own disposition, and stamped with its image and superscription.

Theatrical genius seemed to have been inherent in the Kemble blood. It is hard to say whether JOHN KEMBLE was greater as an actor, or his sister, Mrs Siddons, as an actress. His mind was cast in the same mould; but its features in some respects were different from hers. He had the same tendency to the grand and the heroic—unbending firmness, unconquerable courage, Roman magnanimity, were what he loved to represent, and in which he chiefly excelled. But he had more versatility of power than his majestic sister. King Lear, Macbeth, Othello, were performed by him with as much success as Brutus, Cato, or Coriolanus. *The Stranger* was one of his greatest pieces. The character of Haller, worn down by grief, emaciated by anguish, firm in resolution, but writhing under emotion, suited his peculiar and transcendant power. He portrayed to the life the idea of Virgil—

> "Nullis ille movetur
> Fletibus, aut voces ullas tractabiles audit:
> Fata obstant, placidasque viri deus obstruit aures.
> . . . . . Assiduis hinc atque hinc, vocibus heros,
> Tunditur et magno persentit pectore curas.
> Mens immota manet; lachrymæ volvuntur inanes."

Kemble's figure and countenance were admirably adapted to the representation of melancholy or dignified character. Both were heroic. Cast in the Roman mould, his face had the high features, stern expression, and lofty air, which spring from magnanimity of soul and conscious lustre of descent. His air, step, and manner on the stage, were entirely in unison with this character; though not tall, his majestic carriage and firm step bespoke the heroic mind. He walked the boards like Coriolanus; his seat at the council was that of Cato; Brutus could not with more dignity have drawn his sword from his scabbard. His voice was husky, and generally in a kind of sing-song, but powerful in his bursts of passion. It is probable that his style of acting would not meet with the same unqualified admiration now which it did in his time; it was better suited to a

heroic than a utilitarian age. It would now be complained of as stiff and unnatural. It bespoke the period which achieved the victories of Nelson and Wellington, rather than that which raised a monument to a successful railway speculator. But it is not on that account likely to be the less elevating, or to have approached less closely to the eternal standard of ideal perfection.

Kemble was a great antiquarian. He had closely studied the dress, arms, accoutrements, architecture, and furniture of former ages, and exhibited them with admirable fidelity on the stage. His flowing white robes in Cato, his glittering helmet in Coriolanus, his broad short sword in Brutus, are yet present to the recollection of all who witnessed them. These adjuncts to theatrical effect are not to be despised, even by the most exalted genius. They constitute part of its charming illusion ; it is no small addition to a noble performance to see the whole still life with which it is surrounded a complete realisation of former times ; to behold again revived the exact feudal armies of Henry V. or Hotspur ; to see Othello arrayed in the true garb of Venetian wealth, and Brutus or Coriolanus walking the boards with the air and arms of Roman warriors. Immense was the attention which Kemble bestowed on this subject. So strongly did it occupy his mind, so largely did it influence his conversation, that one was sometimes almost tempted to think that nature had destined him rather for an antiquarian than a tragedian. But when he appeared on the stage in the characters he had thus arrayed with so much ease in the garb and panoply of former times, it at once was seen to what end that ancient lore had been applied. It was all brought to bear on the graphic delineation of character ; it was as an adjunct of mind, that matter was to him so much the object of study. It was the combination of both which constituted the magical illusion of his performance.

" Time may again revive,
But ne'er eclipse the charm,
When Cato spoke in him alive,
Or Hotspur kindled warm.
What soul was not resigned entire
To the deep sorrows of the Moor,
What English heart was not on fire,
With him at Agincourt?

And yet a majesty possessed
His transport's most impetuous tone,
And to each passion of his breast
The Graces gave their zone.
Fair as some classic dome
Robust and richly graced,
Your Kemble's spirit was the home
Of genius and of taste;
Taste like the silent dial's power,
That when supernal light is given,
Can measure inspiration's hour,
And tell its height in heaven.
At once ennobled and correct,
His mind surveyed the tragic page,
And what the actor could effect,
The scholar could presage."

Kemble's style of acting, as his cast of mind, was at bottom the same as that of Mrs Siddons, and that circumstance rather diminished than enhanced the effect of their performing together. They were too similar in mind as well as body, they were brother and sister—they could never be lovers. As the hero and heroine are generally in the latter predicament, it may be conceived how much this similarity took away from the effect of two performers of opposite sexes, but each of such transcendant excellence, acting at the same time. Yet was the impression produced by this combination of talent great indeed, and such as amply to justify the glowing lines of the poet:—

"And there was many an hour
Of blended kindred fame,
When Siddons's auxiliar power
And sister magic came;
Together at the Muse's side
The tragic paragons had grown—
They were the children of her pride,
The columns of her throne;
And undivided favour ran
From heart to heart in their applause,
Save for the gallantry of man,
In lovelier woman's cause."

But if the similarity of Kemble and Mrs Siddons in character and style of acting marred in a certain degree the effect of their playing together, the same could not be said of the great successor of the latter on the tragic stage, with whom in his later years he not unfrequently performed. Miss O'Neil was the worthy successor of Mrs Siddons in her noble art, and yet she differed from her in so many particulars, that the full effect of her playing with John Kemble was brought forth. Inferior to her great predecessor in

majesty of figure and grandeur of conception, to Miss Helen Faucit in winning grace and captivating playfulness, she was equal to either in the delineation of the pathetic, in the representation of the heartrending passions which have been conceived by the great masters of the dramatic art. She was not so tall as Mrs Siddons, and had neither her commanding air nor majestic features. Her countenance, chiselled with a perfection which statuary could scarcely imitate, was rendered more attractive by the perfect beauty and almost pellucid clearness of her skin. Without being sable, her hair was fine: her figure, though not lofty, was cast in the finest proportions. Her disposition led her to the representation of sorrow and tenderness; and no human being ever portrayed the sufferings of woman in greater perfection. She had not the playfulness of manner which wins the heart in lighter characters, or in serious characters in their happier hours; gravity of demeanour was her general characteristic. But when the passions were roused, when woe was felt, when the terrible was to be represented, nothing could exceed the magnificence of her powers. It was not the heroine or tragedy queen relenting or broken down by suffering, like Mrs Siddons, that appeared: it was the sensitive and affectionate woman who stood revealed in all the simplicity of genuine distress. Nothing could exceed her pathetic powers. She was conscious of them, and brought them forth, whenever the occasion would permit, in their full force. In the last scenes of Belvidera and Juliet she more *continuously* represented the extremity of woe than either Mrs Siddons or Miss Helen Faucit, though she could not exceed them in the vehemence and effect of their occasional bursts of uncontrollable passion.

It is surprising how much the impression, even of the greatest acting, is enhanced by being performed along with another performer of equal powers. The extreme rarity of such a combination increases its effect: it is hardly ever seen by any one on more than a few occasions during a whole lifetime; but when it is, it can never be forgotten. It was the rare good fortune of both France and England, thirty years ago, to possess this singular combination of genius at the same time: for Talma and Mdlle. Georges were performing at the Theatre Français at the moment that Kemble

and Miss O'Neil were captivating every heart at Covent Garden. Though the great English tragedian was then advanced in years, and stooped considerably in private, the energy of his spirit threw off every physical weakness when he appeared on the stage ; Coriolanus or Hotspur never trod the field of battle with more majesty than he did the boards. Miss O'Neil was then in the zenith of her charms—young, beautiful, and enchanting. The disparity of years was forgotten when they appeared together. Age seemed reluctant to invade the sanctuary of so much genius. They realised in a degree of perfection perhaps never before witnessed the beautiful lines of Milton :—

> "Not equal, as their sex not equal seemed ;
> For valour he and contemplation formed ;
> For beauty she and sweet attactive grace:
> He for God only ; she for God in him."

Of all the characters which these two great performers played together, the most admirable were the Stranger and Mrs Haller. They seemed conceived by the poet for their respective excellencies. The melancholy expression, gaunt visage, and sepulchral voice of Kemble suited the Stranger, as well as the marble hue, plaintive voice, and pathetic manner of Miss O'Neil were adapted for Mrs Haller. She was the most perfect image in that character from which a painter would have taken his conception of a lovely Magdalene. Nothing could exceed the impression produced when she threw herself on the ground, and said, "I am that wretch!" It was the agony of repentance in the confession of crime. When Kemble, in the touching interview with her in the last act, used the expression,

> "—— You see it
> Here in my faded form, here in my sunken cheek,"

the image of heart-stricken woe stood before you, and the look and manner added the form of reality to the words. But the crowning scene of the whole was the last, when the children were brought in. Such was the impression then produced on the audience, that two-thirds of them were invariably dissolved in tears : and when, overcome with the flood of parental tenderness, they rushed into each other's arms, the curtain fell amidst transports which never since have been equalled on the British stage.*

* The greatest actress now on the stage, and whose profound reflection entitles

Notwithstanding these high excellencies, and the magnificent exterior which nature had given her for their exhibition, Miss O'Neil had not much original genius. She struck out nothing new in her characters; she did not, like Mrs Siddons, electrify the audience by a look or a gesture never thought of by the poet; but, adding tenfold to the force of his lines, and in perfect harmony with his conceptions, she worked out with admirable effect the idea of the character presented in the drama, and brought her wonderful persuasive and pathetic powers to give it its full development. But that was the limit of her greatness. She did not originate: she brought out the poet's idea, and nothing more. No man could say that her acting had given him a new conception of a character; it had only realised what his had already formed. Nothing could exceed her histrionic powers; but she had not the creative soul within her. None could perform better; but she could not have composed a tragedy. She had not the awful majesty of Mrs Siddons, nor the winning playfulness of Miss Faucit: persuasive earnestness, deep pathos, were her peculiar gifts, and her figure and countenance enabled her to represent them with the highest possible effect. In that branch of her art, she could not be excelled.

Nothing struck the English who visited Paris when the Continent was opened by the peace of 1814, so much as the vehemence and energy of the French style of acting. This was the more remarkable, as it was so much at variance with the idea of the French stage which all had formed from reading the great masterpieces of their drama. The stately characters of Corneille, the pathetic tenderness of Racine, the redundant declamation of Voltaire, seemed to call for similar dignity and *retenue* in their performance. Instead

all her opinions to the highest respect, has made a change in the close of this drama: she makes Mrs Haller fall back in a faint as the curtain falls, and no appearance of reconciliation is presented to the audience. Her idea apparently is, that the fault of Mrs Haller could not be forgiven, at least in this world; and she leaves it uncertain whether she dies or recovers. The change was in accordance with the high standard of moral feeling which characterises all Miss Helen Faucit's conceptions. But we own we felt something of disappointment when the well-remembered rush of the long-severed parents at the voice of their children was no longer seen, and doubt whether any but the most virtuous emotions could be produced by such a touching exhibition on the stage, especially when preceded by such deep-felt woe on both sides. The common idea of that offence being unpardonable, suits rather the pride of man than either the feelings of generosity or the precepts of religion.

of this, nothing on the English stage was comparable to the vehemence and energy of the French acting; and what was very remarkable, this animated style of acting began from the very outset of their performance. Talma and Mademoiselle Georges began reciting the pompous Alexandrian verses of the Cid or Oreste, with the vehemence of manner which Kemble reserved for the concluding scenes of Romeo or Othello. Talma pronounced the lines in the early part of Oreste,

> "Si vous conservez sentimens si chers,
> Observez cette tombe, et regardez ces fers,"

with the utmost possible vehemence of impassioned gesture. It was the same in all its parts; it was the same with Mademoiselle Georges; it is the same now with Mademoiselle Rachel, especially in the delineation of jealousy or scorn, in which she is so supremely great. The intensity of her acting is generally in the inverse ratio of the vehemence of the poet's lines which she repeats.

This appears at first sight very extraordinary; but a little reflection must show that it is the natural and probably unavoidable result of the Greek drama, of which these great actors personated the characters. As that species of tragedy admitted no change of scenes, but little change of time, and it was all, on the French stage at least, written in heroic verses, in rhyme, the great danger was that the performance would pall upon the audience—it would appear tedious and insipid. This is what Voltaire, in his admirable Commentaries on Corneille, is perpetually complaining of; the languor of his scenes, the want of warmth and animation in the verses, is the continual subject of complaint. Racine strove to obviate this defect by the exquisite beauty of versification, Voltaire by the rapidity and succession of events which he introduced. He never lets the interest flag, but presents one scene of difficulty or hairbreadth escape after another: his acts are a constant succession of *denouements*. The same necessity, in a still greater degree, was felt by the Greek dramatists. Hence the intensity and long-continued grief which they represent in their tragedies, and the periodical recurrence of lyric poetry and singing in the choruses. The tragedies of Sophocles and Euripides are often little more than a continual wail, arising from the

principal characters being felled, as it were, by an unparalleled succession of disasters. It is evident, from the intensity of the language used, that the style of acting in the tragedies of ancient Greece was animated and vehement in the extreme. The same necessity has been felt by the performers on the French stage. Experience has taught them that they must compensate want of variety in incident, or change of scene, by increased vehemence of action ; and hence the animated, and, as it appears to English eyes, declamatory style in which they recite their stately verses.

Talma had none of the physical advantages of his great rival on the English stage. He was rather short than otherwise : his figure was stout and thick-set ; his countenance highly expressive when animated, but heavy and unmeaning at ordinary times. It was the extraordinary energy and vehemence of his mind which overcame all these obstacles, and rendered him, for a long time, and during a period marked by genius in every department, without a rival on the French stage. No man could portray the most intense passions with more success ; in that respect he was, perhaps, superior even to Kean, whose style of acting his very closely resembled. Such was the energy of feeling with which he was animated that it used to shake his very frame ; his hands thrilled with passion as those of Mademoiselle Rachel now do when she portrays the transports of jealousy in the tragedy of Bajazet. The only thing to be regretted, at least it appeared so to an English spectator, was, that this energetic representation of passion *began too soon, and was continued too long.* You were worn out with pity and sympathy, as in Matthews' comic representation you were by laughing, before he had got through his part. This is an error into which performers, especially those with ardent minds, are extremely apt to fall, and which it requires no common amount of judgment and strength of understanding to avoid. They are so absorbed in their own part, with which they are familiar, so heated by its passions, so melted by its sorrows, that they forget that the audience, *at first* at least, are not equally roused, and that it is towards the close of the piece only that they share in the warmth of feeling which the actors felt from its commencement. The greatest performers work up their spectators *by degrees*, and only bring forth

their extreme powers when the minds, or rather hearts, of the audience are prepared to receive their full impression. It was that keeping of the violent bursts *in reserve*, and bringing them out at the proper moment, which constituted the strength of John Kemble, as it now does of Miss Helen Faucit. The proper use of such great powers, the restraining them at first, and letting them loose at the proper and decisive moment, closely resembles the management of a reserve force by a great general, and to the disposal of which Napoleon, in great part, owed his astonishing success.

Talma was a valued friend of Napoleon, who used frequently to discuss with him the representation of his characters. Amongst others he discoursed on his personation of Nero in Corneille's tragedy of Britannicus, and made the following curious remark on it—"You are quite wrong in the representation of Nero. *You should conceal the tyrant. No man admits his crimes in words either to himself or others.* They appear only in his deeds. You and I speak history, but we speak it like other men." No one can have reflected on the human heart, as he sees it in others or feels it in himself, without feeling that this observation is well founded. Nevertheless, it is perhaps the last one which either dramatic writers, novelists, or actors think of.

Mademoiselle Georges was, as an actress, what Talma was as an actor; but she had far greater natural advantages. She was, in every respect, a fine woman. Like almost all celebrated actresses, she inclined in her later years to *embonpoint*, and became unsuited for the representation of juvenile heroines. But she had great personal beauty. A magnificent bust, dark and luxuriant hair, fine eyebrows, and a commanding figure, realised all that the imagination could conceive of the stately dames who were conceived by Corneille and Voltaire. In Zaïre and Alzire, Electra and Iphigenie, she was superb. Like Talma, her style of acting was much more animated than we are accustomed to in this country. Her natural manner was stately and dignified; but this soon gave way to the conventional and general, perhaps necessary vehemence of French acting. In impassioned scenes, especially the pathetic, her powers were very great, equal to all but those of Mrs Siddons on the English stage. She had the arts, so well known on the Continent,

so little studied in England, of preserving a youthful appearance in advanced years, and appeared radiant in charms at fifty.

Although belonging to a different branch of the profession, a celebrated performer at the same period at Paris deserves to be ranked with the great tragic actresses of the day : the genius of MADLLE BIGOTINI rendered the pantomime, in which she was so pre-eminent, expressive of the tenderest, the sweetest, the most pathetic emotions. To say that she was the first dancer on the opera stage of her day is to express the least of her merits. That is in general so inferior a branch of the dramatic art, that, how captivating soever to the senses, it cannot deserve to be placed alongside of those branches of it which aim at the expression of mental emotions or generous resolves. But Madlle Bigotini's taste and genius rendered dancing expressive of both these things. Her figure was perfect, and, what is rare in persons of her exhausting profession, had that fulness along with elegance which constitutes so essential a part of physical beauty. Her countenance, her hair, her bust, were all charming : they completed the delightful impression which the exquisite grace of her movements produced. But it was her tragic powers which were the wonderful thing ; it was in the expression of the pathetic, by motion and gesture, that she was supremely great. More tears were drawn, even from a Parisian audience, albeit not much given to the melting mood, by her representation of Nina or the Somnambule, than by any performer at the same time on the English stage, except John Kemble and Miss O'Neil in the Stranger and Mrs Haller. This is very remarkable, and demonstrates how large a part grace and gesture have in the production of tragic emotion ; for no words were spoken in the Somnambule, nor even recitative pronounced. It was the grace and expression of pantomime which did the whole. But they spoke a language which went home at once to every human heart.

If genius in one great performer rendered dancing and gesture expressive of tragic emotion, singing, in another, combined with great dramatic powers to produce a similar expression. MADAME PASTA was confessedly the prima donna of her day ; but her vocal powers, great as they were,

constituted but a part of her wonderful performance. Her charm consisted even more in her acting than in her voice; in those deep tragic powers, that faculty of expressing profound emotion, which is so frequently the accompaniment of female Italian genius. She realised all that Madame de Stael had conceived, in mind at least, of Corinne. Her figure was large; she had not the delicate proportions of Madlle Bigotini, and she was not adapted by nature for the representation of young or sylph-like heroines. But in the delineation of the full-grown woman, of the distresses or passions of the matron, she possessed every advantage which nature and genius could bestow. Her countenance, without positive beauty, was in the highest degree striking, her hair dark and luxuriant, her eyebrows marked, and finely turned, and every feature, when she poured her magnificent voice forth on the opera stage, lighted up with the most intense expression; jealousy, ambition, love, were alternately portrayed by her to perfection. In Didone and Semiramide, she was unrivalled; but she could not have portrayed Juliet or Rosalind. No one could see her perform any of the great characters in *Metastasio* without being convinced that she was a first-rate tragic actress, and perhaps feeling a sentiment of regret that so much genius should be in a manner obscured by the other and less spiritual attractions of the opera stage, and turned aside from the regular drama, where it would have shone forth in undivided and transcendant lustre.

Though KEAN was an Englishman, and performed exclusively in the national drama, he belonged more to the French than the British style of acting. He had none of the physical advantages of the Kemble race; he could not, like them, entrance the audience by the mere look and walk on the stage. His figure was short and ungraceful; his countenance, though animated and expressive, far from being cast in the finer mould. He had nothing aristocratic in his appearance or manner: he wanted the Roman profile of Kemble, and the majestic air of Mrs Siddons. His voice, though powerful, was not deep or sonorous, and in impassioned scenes it often degenerated into a sort of scream, which was positively painful. Nature, therefore, had disqualified him from taking the highest place in his profession; he never could be a Garrick or a Kemble. But it was

astonishing what genius and energy did to conquer these disadvantages. His mind was ardent, his emotions vehement, his feelings impassioned. Kemble said, "Sir, he is dreadfully in earnest." That was the secret of his success. He felt strongly, his imagination was vivid, his heart was warm: those are the great moving powers, alike in acting and eloquence; and this Kean evinced in the highest degree. The earnestness of his manner, the vehemence of his feeling, the force of his passion, overcame all obstacles, and ere long silenced criticism in one uncontrollable burst of universal admiration.

It may readily be conceived, from this description, for what characters this very powerful actor was adapted. Macbeth, Shylock, Iago, Cassius, Richard III., were played by him with the highest possible effect. His acting was not less powerful in other parts, where physical beauty is more called for; but the illusion was injured, perhaps dispelled, by its want. Nothing could be more impassioned or vehement than his performing in the last scenes of Romeo; but the effect was destroyed by the impossibility of conceiving that Juliet could ever have been in love with him. His representation of Hamlet was great in conception, as well as in execution, but his figure and countenance did not realise our idea of the Prince of Denmark. It was very different from the wan cheek, stately form, and imposing air of Kemble. In Othello, this defect was less conspicuous; personal beauty was not the quality which captivated Desdemona in the man; still it was difficult to conceive that the diminutive figure which stood before you was the hero who had sought the bubble reputation in the cannon's mouth, and won the heart of the beauteous Venetian by recounting his perils in the deadly breach. But these physical disadvantages, which were not felt in Iago, Richard III., or Shylock, only exalted the impressions of Kean's genius, though they often weakened the effect of his acting: for what must have been the force of that mind which could overcome so many obstacles, and draw thunders of applause from the audience in every character which he undertook?

Any account of the great performers on the British stage, during the last half century, would be imperfect, in which a

prominent place was not given to Miss Fanny Kemble.* This highly gifted lady, like others of exalted genius, is not less remarkable in other respects than as an actress. Her performances on the stage, great and attractive as they were, were but a part of the general powers with which she was gifted. She is genius personified. You cannot read three pages of her sonnets, you could not see a single scene of her acting, without being convinced of that. Though descended from the great histrionic family of the Kembles, she is in almost all respects, save ability, the reverse of them. She was, when on the stage, neither majestic, like Mrs Siddons, nor stately, like John Kemble. Their elevated conceptions had descended to her, but they had done so stripped of the imposing and awful character in which they appeared in her predecessors. Greater powers had come to her from herself than her ancestors. She took more by gift than inheritance. From the recesses of her own mind, from the cells of her own genius, she has drawn a stream of burning thought, of generous resolves, of devoted affection, of ardent yet pure sentiments, which, more strongly than even the lofty and dignified ideas of the Kembles, characterised her thoughts, and have imprinted themselves in an indelible manner alike on her acting and her compositions.

With these great powers, this ardent and elevated genius, if Miss Fanny Kemble had been regularly bred to the stage, and prosecuted it for a course of years as a profession, she would have made one of the greatest actresses that ever adorned the English theatre. Nature had not done so much for her, so far as external advantages go, as for her aunt, Mrs Siddons. She had not her lofty figure, majestic gait, or Juno-like beauty of countenance. Highly expressive, teeming with thought, radiant with genius, her features wanted the regularity, her figure the height, her carriage the dignity, which are such powerful aids to intellectual ability on the stage. She never could have walked the boards like Mrs Siddons in Queen Catherine, or electrified the audience by a look like John Kemble in Coriolanus. She never could have sat for the Tragedy Muse as we see

* Mrs Butler will forgive the apparent freedom of this appellation. It is the fate of genius to be known by the title under which its greatest impression has been made on the world.

it portrayed on Sir Joshua's immortal canvass. But if Nature had denied her these advantages, she had made amends, and perhaps more than amends, by the enthusiastic temperament she had imprinted on her mind, the fervent genius which beamed in every thought, the ardent soul which shone forth in every conception. Her frown was as dark as the thunderstorm, but her smile was like the sun emerging from the clouds. Her eyes, of uncommon beauty and brilliancy, seemed the windows of a radiant and ethereal soul within. These transcendant powers, like the concentrated rays of the sun in the burning-glass, pierced through every obstacle, penetrated every heart, and surrounded her brief public career with a halo of renown—an enthusiasm of admiration, which yet lives in undiminished fervour in the recollections of all who witnessed it, augmented and sanctified by the mournful reflection that it is now, alas! terminated for ever.

It would be undue partiality to say, however, that Miss Kemble, during the short period she remained on the stage, had attained the highest place in the histrionic art. Considering that she had not been bred to it, but began life with very different prospects, and embraced it as a profession from the generous desire she in a great part realised, of extricating her father from pecuniary difficulties, it was astonishing what she did—how rapidly she rose to renown. But her heart was not on the stage—her mind was set on its own creations, not the objects of every-day life with which she was surrounded. She had not the previous training requisite for decided success on the stage. All the fine arts, in their higher stages at least, can be mastered only by persevering study and strenuous efforts. It is not in three months or three years that perfection is to be attained in an exertion of genius, on a level in its greatest displays with the painting of Raphael, the poetry of Milton, the melody of Mozart. Long and persevering efforts, solitary reflection, profound meditation, are necessary to master the higher branches of this entrancing art. Like Scipio Africanus, in the words of Cicero, the great actor must be "never less alone than when alone, and never less at rest than when at rest."*

* "Nunquam minus solus quam cum solus, nec omnino otiosus quam cum in otio."—Cicero.

Miss Kemble might, and doubtless would, have become a great actress, had she remained longer on the stage, for she had splendid conceptions ; but she was taken from it too soon to have attained uniform excellence. The soul was there—the ideas were there—the powers were there ; at times the execution was felicitous, but it was very unequal. Uncertainty was the great defect of her acting. She was almost without the power of *self-direction*—the most valuable faculty of the mind, and never witnessed but in persons of uncommon strength of intellect, and even in those generally only in advanced years. Miss Kemble carried a magnificent set of sails, but she had little ballast on board, and the vessel seldom obeyed the impulse of the helm. So entirely was she the creature of impulse, not only in her feelings but her conceptions, that her representation, even of the same character, was seldom the same two nights together, and not unfrequently the most brilliant displays which entranced every heart were, even in the same parts, succeeded by comparative failure. Her genius on the stage shone forth with the fitful splendour of the northern lights, presaging tempest in nature, or woe to man, not the steady effulgence of the sun, ever the same, and unceasingly diffusing warmth and happiness over a grateful world.

If we would appreciate Miss Kemble's genius in its full dimensions—if we would see what she was from the hands of Nature, and conceive what she might have become in her profession by the aid of steady effort and persevering energy, we must study her lyric poetry. In that department there is some room for unqualified admiration. Some of her sonnets will bear a comparison with the finest lyrical poetry in the English language, with Moore's "Irish Melodies," Gray's "Ode to Spring," or Hemans' "Graves of a Household." It is impossible to read them without mournful feelings. They awaken the warmest interest in the author —the highest admiration for her genius—the deepest commiseration for her sufferings. She appears to have encountered the too frequent fate of exalted minds of a sensitive and ardent temperament, that of awakening little sympathy among those around her ; of living in an ideal world of her own creation ; and being perpetually crossed, by finding how widely it differed from the sober

realities of which life is made up. Glimpses of ethereal joy she had at times; but so brief as to fail in producing any permanent effect on her character, and tending only to aggravate, by their brightness, the general gloom by which they were succeeded. Melancholy is the prevailing character of her compositions; but it is the melancholy of a vehement and impassioned mind; of one which had conceived the highest felicity, and had sometimes tasted it—but had seen it dashed from her lips, and had lost all hopes of regaining it in this life. It could not be otherwise. If to thought as exalted, genius as bright, imagination as ardent as Miss Kemble's, it was given to be permanently united to a mind as lofty, feelings as warm, conception as vivid, as her own, combined with the solidity and judgment requisite for the regulation of such transcendant qualities, its destiny would be too brilliant for this world—it would escape the common law of humanity, and cease to aspire after immortality.

"Too tempting a haven
To poor mortals were given,
And the hope would rest there,
Which should anchor in heaven."

To show that these high eulogiums are not overstrained, we subjoin Miss Kemble's exquisite lines on Venice—among the finest of her fine compositions:—

"Night in her dark array
Steals o'er the Ocean,
And with departed day
Hushed seems its motion.
Slowly o'er yon blue coast
Onward she's treading,
Till its dark line is lost
'Neath her veil spreading.
The bark on the rippling deep
Hath found a pillow;
And the pale moonbeams sleep
On the green billow.
Bound by her emerald zone
Venice is lying;
And round her marble crown
Night winds are sighing.
From the high lattice now
Bright eyes are gleaming,
That seem on Night's dark brow
Brighter stars beaming.
Now o'er the blue lagune
Light barks are dancing,
And, 'neath the silver moon
Swift oars are glancing.
Strains from the mandolin
Steal o'er the water;

Echo replies between
To mirth and laughter.
O'er the wave seen afar,
Brilliantly shining,
Gleams like a fallen star,
Venice reclining."

This is the highest style of lyric poetry. The images are charming—the thoughts romantic—the language condensed and powerful: but it is descriptive poetry, which, delightful as it is, does not afford scope for the highest flights of the poetic muse. It is in painting the human heart—in unfolding, by a word or an epithet, its inmost feelings, most secret thoughts, that the greatest powers of poetry are shown. Miss Kemble may justly claim a very high place in this elevated style: the intensity of her thoughts, the vehemence of her affections, could find vent only in

"Thoughts that breathe and words that burn."

But here the prevailing melancholy of her mind, arising from the void produced by an incessant yearning after the ideal amidst the fetters of the real, has imprinted a dark and mournful character upon her writings. She dwells with delight on the wind and the storm: the immensity of the deep, the flowers of the forest, excite her imagination; images of joy and hope cross her fancy, only to remind her of disappointment, or awaken the mournful recollections of their fleeting existence:—

"Hark! how the wind comes gathering in its course,
And, sweeping onward with resistless force,
Howls through the silent space of starless skies,
And on the breast of the swoln ocean dies.
Oh! Thou art terrible, thou viewless Power!
That rid'st destroying at the midnight hour!
We hear thy mighty passion, but the eye
Knows nothing of thine awful majesty.
We see all mute creation bow before
Thy viewless wings, as thou careerest o'er
This rocking world; that in the boundless sky
Suspended, vibrates as thou rushest by.
There is no terror in the lightning's glare,
That breaks its red track through the trackless air;
There is no terror in the voice that speaks
From out the clouds, when the loud thunder breaks
Over the earth, like that which dwells in thee,
Thou unseen Tenant of Immensity."

The passage that follows, on crossing the Atlantic, shows with what exquisite images the mind of genius may be fraught, and with what felicity they may be expressed:—

"Night looks upon the slumbering universe,
There is no breeze on silver-crowned tree,
There is no breath on dew-bespangled flower,
There is no wind sighs on the sleepy wave,
There is no sound hangs in the solemn air:
All, all are silent—all are dreaming—all,
Save yon eternal eyes, that now shine forth,
Marking the slumberer's destinies. The moon
Sails on the horizon verge, a moving glory,
Pure and unrivalled, for no pale orb
Approaches to invade the sea of light
That lives around her—save yon little star,
That sparkles on her robe of fleecy clouds
Like a bright gem, fallen from her radiant brow."

The following lines embody a thought which has probably, from the beginning of time, been familiar to every mind of an ardent and imaginative cast, but never before been expressed in such beautiful language :—

"But that within the inmost chamber of my soul,
There is another world, a blessed home,
O'er which no mortal power hath e'er control,
Anigh which ill things do never come.
There speak the voices that I love to hear,
There smile the glances that I love to see;
There live the forms of those my soul holds dear
For ever in that secret world with me,
They who have walked with me along life's way,
And severed been by Fortune's adverse tide;
Who ne'er again in Time's uncertain Day
In weal or woe may wander by my side,
They all are there."

After these extracts, it need not be said that Miss Kemble's poetical genius is of the very highest class; and that if she persevere in that brilliant career, and superadds learning and contemplation to her creative and imaginative powers, she will become one of the greatest lyric poets of England. And let her not rest in the mournful belief that she is alone in the world—that no one sympathises with, no one reveres her. It is often the melancholy fate of genius to be solitary, so far as companionship goes. The highest mountains necessarily stand alone in their vastness. But she can never be alone, if the sympathy of minds is considered. She has struck a chord which will for ever vibrate in the human heart: she will be united in thought, in every age, with the generous, the brave, the high-minded; and thousands who, like the author, know her only by the exquisite conceptions she has given to the world, will ever feel towards her the admiration of genius, and almost the affection of friendship.

Mr Macready has done so much, both by his personal

performances, and his efforts in the management of theatres, to uphold the legitimate drama, in an age when it was well-nigh overwhelmed by the amphitheatre and the melodrama, that his name can never be mentioned but with the highest respect in any disquisition on the British stage. If tragedy is not banished from our theatres, and supplanted by Timour the Tartar, the Cricket on the Hearth, and Mrs Caudle's Curtain Lectures, it is mainly owing to his continued and most meritorious efforts. As an actor, his performances entitle him to a high place in the scale of histrionic excellence. He is uniformly chaste, reflecting, and gentlemanlike; his conceptions are the result of long thought, deep study of his author, and no small amount of historical and antiquarian research. In the latter respect he much resembles Kemble. He has his learning, reflection, and elevated conceptions of what his profession should be. These are great excellencies; and his execution in many respects keeps pace with his ideas. We say in many respects, for it would betray partiality to say that in every particular his powers are equal to his ideas, or that he is to be placed on a level with Kemble or Kean in the force of actual performance. This does not so much seem to be owing to the want of physical powers, for they are very considerable, but rather to the absence of vehemence and energy of conception. He is learned rather than original; correct rather than impassioned; free from fault rather than overflowing with effect. There is little to criticise in his acting, but sometimes not so much as could be desired to admire; and Victor Hugo, at Paris, characterised the two with equal justice and felicity when he said, after seeing them act together, "M. Macready a du talent; mais Mademoiselle Faucit le génie."

The best characters to give an idea of Mr Macready's powers are, King Lear and Cardinal Richelieu. The first is an admirable conception, and is by far the most perfect piece of acting by a male performer now on the stage. We doubt if Garrick's were equally true to Shakspeare's idea; we know that Kemble's was less effective. He has brought out this celebrated and most difficult part to a degree of perfection never before witnessed in the English theatre. Nor is his Cardinal Richelieu less admirable. The pro-

found dissimulation, firm determination, grasping intellect, and vast capacity, of that wonderful statesman, peculiarly suit Mr Macready's powers, and are portrayed by him with admirable effect. His antiquarian and historical lore has here powerfully come to the aid of his professional abilities; and he has apparently taken advantage of his residence at Paris to gather many interesting and graphic details of his manner, dress, and habits, as well of mind as body. Altogether, it is one of the most perfect personations now to be seen on the stage. He is classical, chaste, and correct, in Virginius—esteemed by many his best part. But to those who recollect Kemble, the Roman countenance, erect air, and restrained dignity, which that great actor exhibited in Brutus, Cato, and Coriolanus, appear sadly wanting. Nature has not given Macready the externals of a hero, and nothing, on the stage, can make up for that deficiency.

It would be unjust to conclude an enumeration of the distinguished British actors of the last half century, without mentioning the name of YOUNG. Without possessing the commanding figure of Kemble, or the impassioned energy of Kean, he was distinguished by merits of a very high order. He was uniformly chaste and correct; at times powerful and energetic. None could assume dignity with more effect. He was particularly excellent in Othello and Macbeth; and equally successful in Shylock and Iago. His acting could hardly be said to be the result of poetic temperament or original genius; it was formed on the suggestion of long thought, anxious reflection, and correct judgment. He was too fastidious to be original, too fearful of giving offence to win impassioned admiration. He embodied his author's ideas in his acting, and threw himself with great effect into his mind; but he scarcely ever superadded to it original conceptions of his own. Judgment and discretion were his leading qualities, and they are of vast importance on the stage. He never offended either the most fastidious eye, or shocked the most refined taste. If he seldom succeeded in drawing down from the audience the thunders of applause which followed the vehement and fearless bursts of Kemble or Siddons, he never hurt the most delicate feeling, and often melted the most obdurate heart. His acting, in this respect, was a correct reflection of his character, which

was honourable and respectable in the highest degree, and redeemed a profession often disfigured by the levities and frailties which are too closely allied to genius, by the exhibition of the qualities which would have done honour to any walk in life.

Beyond all question, the first actress now on the stage, Miss HELEN FAUCIT, is, in the delineation of deep tragedy, equal to the most renowned of her great predecessors; and in the combination of its pathos with the grace of refined manner, superior to any since the time of Garrick. It is hard to say whether she excels most in the representation of the vehement or attractive passions; in the fascination of love and the sportive elegance of highbred life, or in the terrible scenes of sorrow and agony which have been conceived by the great masters of the tragic art. Her leading characteristic—the quality which essentially distinguishes her from Mrs Siddons or Miss O'Neil—is the elegance which invariably distinguishes all her movements. Of her, with truth, it may be said—

"Each step is beauty—every motion grace."

Her attitudes might furnish the most perfect models to the sculptor; and the proportions of her figure, which is uncommonly fine, charm the eye not less than the deep intonations and flexible richness of voice penetrate the heart. Without entire regularity of feature, her countenance possesses the whole beauty arising from powerful and changing expression. A profusion of jet-black locks, curling over a fine bust, add the contrast of dark shade and light to the changes of her highly expressive and powerful countenance. Its different phases are so various, and yet so riveting, that it is often scarcely possible to believe that they belong to the same individual, or that so much fascination can have proceeded from one set of features. To her may be truly applied what genius has ascribed to ideal beauty:—"Quand elle baissait ses longues paupières, dont l'ombre se dessinait sur la blancheur de ses joues, on eut cru voir la sérieuse Melpomène; mais quand elle levait les yeux, vous l'eussiez prise pour la riante Thalie. Ses cheveux noirs rassemblaient à la fleur d'hyacinthe, et sa taille au palmier de Deloy."*

What is most worthy of admiration in this highly gifted

* CHATEAUBRIAND, *Martyrs.*

actress is the versatility of power which she exhibits. In this respect she is more highly gifted than either Mrs Siddons or Miss O'Neil. She is not always majestic, like the former, nor pathetic only, like the latter. She shares more in the variety of Shakspeare's conceptions—in the pliability of Garrick's powers. It is difficult to say whether she delineates with greater felicity the tragic passions of real sorrow, or the lighter graces of winning fascination. Original in every part, she is yet peculiar in all; and so opposite are the characters she exhibits, that it is difficult to conceive that it is the same actress you see at different times on the boards. The parts which give the best idea of her great and varied powers are, Juliet, Rosalind, Desdemona, Belvidera, Pauline, Mrs Haller, Jane Shore, Beatrice, Lady Constance, Julia, Isabella in the Fatal Marriage, and King Réné's daughter. Isabella is peculiarly suited to her powers, for it presents an innocent mind overwhelmed by the commission of an unintended crime. In the mixture of purity with remorse, of noble feeling with despair, of love with horror, she is peculiarly great.

Nothing can exceed the vehemence of her bursts of impassioned emotion in some of those pieces: witness the terrible scene where she anticipates wakening from her trance amidst her ancestors' bones, in Juliet; the harrowing death, creeping on the ground, in the agonies of famine, in Jane Shore; the furious burst of indignation on recounting the infamous attempt of the old villain on her honour, in Belvidera; the dreadful mad scene in the close of the same drama; the double sacrifice in the arms of Romeo, in Shakspeare's immortal tragedy; or the sinking on her knees, in prostrate despair, in the last scene where she appears in Antigone. But these bursts, how vehement and powerful soever, are less frequent than they were in the representation of similar characters by Mrs Siddons and Miss O'Neil. Miss Faucit's tendency is towards the tender and the winning. Female fascination, perhaps not unmixed with coquetry, is her natural bent. She has more of the woman in her than either of her great predecessors. It is Rosalind, charming all the world by the playful yet maidenly archness of her demeanour, rather than Belvidera, ever mourning, yet ever persuasive, that appears to suit best the disposition of her mind.

Shakspeare's *As You Like It* is deservedly one of the most popular of all the creations of his matchless fancy. It has not much story—little incident, and scarcely any of what is usually considered "comedy" in the modern sense of the word. It is rather an imaginative Pastoral, interspersed with the broad and racy humour which knows no locality, and is as strongly felt in the nineteenth as it was in the sixteenth century, in Dublin as in London. It abounds with those inimitable sayings, and profound though quaint remarks, which at once go home to every understanding, by their evident truth and foundation in the eternal principles of human nature, and have become, as it were, household words in every part of the empire. But, most of all, it depends on the character of Rosalind —one of those enchanting conceptions, true to nature, yet such as never was seen, and never will be seen in the world, with which the Bard of Avon charmed the aërial visions of his divine imagination. Of Miss Faucit's representation of this celebrated character there is but one thing to be said—"It is absolute perfection." In Rosalind she equals all we read of Mdlle Mars on the French theatre —all that we have seen of Madame Thillon and Mdlle Dejazet in the English. In Isabella she appears as if she never could emerge from tears; but in the forest of Arden she steps forth like an aërial being,

> . . . redolent of joy and youth,
> To breathe a second spring.

What is peculiarly worthy of admiration in this exquisite performance, is the perfect feminine delicacy and propriety which Miss Faucit maintains throughout. Shakspeare sometimes brings Rosalind up to the verge of impropriety, but Miss Faucit never lets her pass the limit, and her joyous spirit bounds away with so much naïveté and sprightliness, that the incipient impression is instantly dissipated. So prolific is her genius—so entirely has she adopted and improved upon the conception of the dramatist, that above two-thirds of the charming image, which is painted indelibly on every mind which witnessed it, is entirely her own. It is quite Shakspearian, but it is not to be found in Shakspeare. Her pantomime would be nearly as effective if she never said a word. The step, the smile, the arch look,

the exquisite playfulness, the uniform grace, the passing malice, and lasting kindness of heart, are her own creation. On the admirable foundation of Shakspeare's genius she has reared up a new structure of her own, which forms the Corinthian capitals of the enchanting edifice.

But this does not diminish—on the contrary, it adds to —her power of delineating the graver and sadder passions; the frequent bursts of tragic emotion which she displays are only rendered more powerful on that account. She throws off the tragedy queen more readily than Mrs Siddons; emerges from tears like the sun from the clouds, with more ease than Miss O'Neil. The greater is the effect of her terrible pathetic powers, when she does put them forth; for they approach more closely to the varying changes—the mingled joy and sorrow of real life. Her object appears to be—

> "By winning words to conquer willing hearts,
> And make persuasion do the work of fear."

In majesty of figure she is not equal to Mrs Siddons—in regularity of features to Miss O'Neil; but in the combination of beauty with genius, of originality with taste, of energy with grace, of sportive playfulness with impassioned feeling, she is altogether without a rival now on the stage, and on a level with the greatest performers that ever adorned the British theatre. Above all, she is perfectly feminine alike in her conception and her movements. The most vehement emotion, the lightest playfulness, never make her forget the respect due to her sex. Grace and delicacy seem to be inherent in her very nature—they have been imprinted as indelibly on her mind as on her figure. Nor are the sterner and graver feelings wanting. Her acting combines, in a remarkable degree, masculine strength of understanding in the conception of character, with feminine grace and delicacy in their execution; and her countenance lightens up alternately, in the animated scenes, with the fascination of love, the glance of indignation, and the vehemence of despair.

Miss Faucit's characters clearly have been the result of deep and solitary meditation. There is no imitation about her. She is neither cast in the Kemble mould, nor has she been formed in the Macready school. Like all persons of

powerful and original genius, she takes counsel from her own thoughts alone, and educes from their varied conceptions the phantasmagoria of beauty which she presents to her audience. Her mind is deeply embued with poetry. She throws herself into the soul of the composer of the characters which she personates ; and, casting his thoughts again in the mould of her own imagination, brings forth a creation more charming than any single genius, how great soever, could be capable of producing. The study of a single character, we should conceive, must, with her, be the work of nearly as much time and thought as their original conception by the dramatic poet. Nevertheless, her creations are mainly founded, as all perfect works of art must be, on the observation of nature. The ideal is, with her, founded on its only sure basis, the real. She has evidently drawn and modelled from the life. It is this which gives her representations their principal charm, and brings them home at once to the hearts of the audience. The enraptured bursts of applause which so frequently reward her greater efforts, demonstrate this. But hers is no slavish imitation of nature. It is nature seen through the eyes of genius which she presents, like the charming paintings of Claude Lorraine, which, true to reality in every particular, yet exhibit, on the whole, a combination more perfect than any scene, how exquisite soever in the actual world, could produce.

This great actress evidently aims at elevating her noble art to its loftiest, most chastened, most purifying object. Endowed by nature with the most attractive graces of her sex, she is yet content sometimes to forego their exhibition in their lighter and more winning form, to personate the more serious and elevated characters, in which courage rises superior to danger, and duty gains the victory over weakness. She feels of what the histrionic art is capable—what a mighty engine, for good or for evil, its powers of fascination qualify it to become. She has taken her part accordingly, and taken it in the right spirit. Her lot has been cast in an age of transition, perhaps corruption, in which, under the cravings of a people insatiate for something new, the drama has been wellnigh turned aside from its higher objects, and converted into the mere handmaid of singing and dancing.

She is bending her great powers to restore it to its more elevated destiny—to render it the means of moral elevation, the instrument of general good. It is doubtful if any efforts can do this ; but if any one can effect it, it is herself.

Miss Faucit's Antigone is one of the most chaste of her personations, but not the most likely to be generally popular. Her conception of the character perfectly conveys the idea of Sophocles. It is not the heroine braving death from the physical contempt of danger, which she exhibits like Zenobia or Joan of Arc ; it is a gentle but affectionate sister discharging a sacred domestic duty, under a full sense of its danger, but a resolute determination to incur it. It is the resignation of the Christian martyr, rather than the spirit of the heathen Amazon, which she depicts. Nothing can be more touching than the representation she gives of the heartrending horror which overpowers Antigone, when, deserted in the extremity of her distress by all the world, she hears the dreadful fate which awaits her of being entombed alive in the rock. But the *uniformity* of the emotion which the piece requires is not favourable to the exhibition of her varied powers. And, indeed, although the genius of this accomplished actress has thus, after the lapse of two thousand three hundred years, responded to that of Sophocles, yet that is not the native bent of her mind, nor, perhaps, the line in which she is destined to attain the highest eminence. She is a child of the soil ; she is essentially national in her ideas. Her mind was born at Stratford-on-Avon ; it was bred in the Forest of Arden ; it emerged to the world beside the tomb of all the Capulets. Heart and soul she is Shakspearian. Her first ambition appears to have been to personate only the tragic heroines of that great dramatist, and she made her earliest appearances in them accordingly on the London stage. Subsequently, however, her ardent admiration for her favourite bard appears to have led her to attempt the personation of Shakspeare's lighter and more playful characters ; and in them she is unrivalled. The power thus acquired of combining the graces of elegant, or rather bewitching comedy, with the passions of tragedy, is what now constitutes her great and peculiar excellence. It is what makes her Juliet or Pauline so attractive. They

exhibit, alternately, the charm of fascinating character and the pathos of tragic event.

If Miss Helen Faucit need fear no competitor on the English, she has a contest worthy of herself to maintain on the French stage. The talents of MADEMOISELLE RACHEL are so great, and yet so peculiar, that they seem to stand forth in the brightest relief beside the attractive graces of her fascinating rival. They are as opposite as "ebon and ivory." Thorwaldsen's beautiful cameos of Day and Night might pass for emblems of their mental characters. Miss Faucit can be at times as deep as midnight; but the sun rises so soon that it does not form her prevailing character. The dark and the terrible constitute Mademoiselle Rachel's general turn of mind. Their step, air, and walk on the stage are as dissimilar as their countenances, powers, and turn of mind. Mademoiselle Rachel has none of the versatility of Miss Faucit. She could not alternately captivate in Rosalind, melt in Belvidera, and thrill with horror in the last scenes of Juliet. She is more stately and mournful. Her mind, cast in a sterner mould, fraught with more vehement feelings, is susceptible chiefly of the stronger passions. In them she is supremely great. Though endowed by nature with the power of attracting admiration, she is not powerful in the delineation of the tender affections. But in the vehement and impassioned the peculiar character of her mind is apparent. She feels she is qualified to awaken love; and, satisfied of that, she has little patience for its lighter moods. She disdains its levities, its inconstancy, its caprice. She passes at once over its earlier stages. She seizes it, not when it treads on flowers, but when it is falling into the abyss. If it be true, as Byron says, that love is—

> "A chase of idle hopes and fears,
> Begun in folly, closed in tears."

she has no patience for the folly—she makes straight to the tears. No one ever excelled, few have equalled her in the representation of the dreadful agony of the mind, when one overpowering passion has concentrated all its energies, and the last beams of hope have sunk in the hopelessness of despair. The inimitable power with which she delineated that state of mind, in the characters of Phèdre and Hermione, at St James's Theatre, last summer, can never be forgotten

by those who witnessed them, and have secured for this great actress a durable place in the pantheon of English as as well as Continental fame.

Of all the racking and distracting passions of the mind in woman, jealousy is the one which Mademoiselle Rachel represents with the greatest power. In its delineation she is decidedly superior to either Mrs Siddons, Miss O'Neil, or Miss Faucit. We hope it is not the case—we are sure one so gifted has less reason than most of her sex to fear rivalry—but we should almost be tempted to believe, from the inimitable power and fearful truthfulness of her delineation of that dreadful passion, in the Sultana, in the noble tragedy of *Bajazet*, that she was drawing from the life—that she expressed what she had herself felt. The fiery torrent seems to have penetrated every vein and fibre of her frame. All her limbs quiver; every muscle trembles, as if the burning iron had convulsed the body, and was entering into the soul. Genius, and that of the very highest kind, was here at once apparent. Its effects were manifest in the thunders of applause which it at once drew forth, even from the courtly dames and reserved daughters of England's nobility. You could not say that she was inspired by the poet; she rather seemed to have inspired him. On the grand conceptions and stately Alexandrines of the immortal dramatist, she had superadded a world of her own creation, so vehement, so entrancing, yet so true to nature, that the audience were hurried along as by an impetuous torrent, and forgot the verses and even the play in the intense interest excited by the performer.

Mademoiselle Rachel has not received any remarkable physical advantages from nature, excepting in the conformation of her person. Her figure, finely formed, is tall and commanding: her hair and complexion dark, but not peculiarly fine: her countenance, though in the highest degree expressive, can hardly be said to be beautiful. But never in a human being was the triumph of mind over matter more signally evinced. She is tragedy personified; as fitly nearly as Mrs Siddons, she might sit with the dagger and the bowl by her side. Her dark eyebrows and sable locks, the sad and melancholy expression of her visage, the stern and relentless glance of her eyes—all bespeak the concen-

tration of the mournful feelings—of the vehement and ravaging passions. She acts from the intensity of her emotions. She is a great performer, because, in similar circumstances in real life, she would have been a dauntless heroine, or perchance an impassioned criminal. The glance of indignation, the thrill of horror, the wail of despair, the pangs of jealousy, the delight of revenge, are represented by her with such inimitable truth, that they seem not to be assumed, but to emanate from a being fraught with these passions. They flow from her as from their natural fountain; they gush forth like pent-up waters on the bursting forth of a lake in the mountains.

Phèdre is perhaps the most touching of Mademoiselle Rachel's representations. The wonderful delicacy with which Racine has softened whatever might be repugnant to modern feelings in that pathetic drama; the dreadful agony of love contending with modesty, passion with duty; the despair consequent on the rejection of an absorbing passion, by the man to whom existence had been devoted, were given by her with the utmost possible effect. In Hermione, there is more room for variety of performance. The tragic emotions are only called forth in their full violence in the last two acts; but there they were given with the whole and terrible powers of the actress. In Chimène, too, in Corneille's noble tragedy of *The Cid*, she appears with equal force, and in a different character. If Phèdre represents the passions which distracted woman in antiquity, Chimène portrays her noblest attitude amid the chivalrous manners and elevated feelings of modern times. The contest of love with duty, of tenderness with pride, of the passion for glory with the impulse of the heart, which Corneille has there so admirably represented, met with a responsive echo in her bosom, and penetrated the breasts of all who witnessed it. In *Les Horaces* she was equally admirable. The contest between Roman patriotism and maidenly affection—between the agonies of love and the dictates of duty, which Livy so touchingly portrayed, and the poet has so admirably expanded, presented a worthy field for her dignified powers.

We prefer her in the tragedies of Corneille to any other parts. She is not tender enough for Racine, discursive enough for Voltaire; but the noble sentiments and stately

verses of Corneille, interspersed with his occasional vehement bursts of passion, are peculiarly adapted for her magnificent powers. When we behold his pieces thus sustained, and recollect that it is the expiring genius of the French stage amidst the deluge of romantic barbarism, which is there embodied in so noble a form, we are impressed with the most melancholy feelings, and are tempted to exclaim, with the poet, on seeing the representation of ancient greatness by Kemble—

"Thou last of all the Romans, fare-thee-well!"

A most erroneous estimate would be formed of Miss Helen Faucit and Mademoiselle Rachel's powers by the amount of present celebrity which they enjoy in ordinary society. You constantly hear in the world that the age of great performers is past; that there are now no Garricks or Siddons's in existence—that the degradation of the stage is owing to the want of genius in the performers. There never was a greater mistake. The fault is not in them, but in ourselves. The testimony of one who is old enough to have beheld both, and saw Siddons and Kemble early in life, when excellence, especially in woman, produces the strongest impression, may be relied on for the assertion, that the performances of these two actresses were never outdone in the olden time. Why, then, are they not, as their great predecessors were, overloaded by a nation's gratitude? Because the nation has become incapable of appreciating them; because the multitudes who now fill the theatres have become impatient for ruder and more sensual attractions. Admiration of them is confined to the really educated and refined; and how many are they in society? Not one in a hundred! It is "Free Trade in Theatres" which has ruined the stage. A class has come to form the majority in every theatre, which is incapable of appreciating anything which is not addressed to the senses. In these days a majority rules everything, and the majority who now fill our theatres are ill-informed persons, alive only to the impulse of the senses. Thence the decline of the drama. In the days of Kemble and Siddons, *ten* minor theatres were not catering in London for the desires of an ignorant and sensual multitude; they had not to contend with the "Crusaders," or

"Mrs Caudle's Curtain Lectures;" the "Pas des Déesses" did not attract crowds by the prodigal display of female charms. In every country, and in every art, there is a period of purity in the national taste, and a period of corruption. We have fallen into the sere leaf.

Mademoiselle JENNY LIND created so great a sensation while her performances lasted, that any account of the British Theatre during the last half century may justly be regarded as imperfect which did not give some description of her wonderful powers. As a vocalist she is in some respects supreme: her power of prolonging a single note, of warbling on a single key, is unrivalled. She is charming in pastorals and lighter pieces: her delineation of Innocence in the *Sonnambula*, and of arch but yet faithful gaiety in the *Figlia del Regimento*, were inimitable, and have deservedly won for her the marvellous reputation which she enjoys. But as a tragic actress she cannot be said to have risen to great eminence. Her Lucia di Lammermoor and Norma were failures. Her powers were not adapted for these deeply tragic parts. She is the Calderon, not the Schiller of dramatic poetry; the Aminta of Tasso or the Pasto Fido of Guarini would suit her better than either Phèdre or Juliet. Within her appropriate limits she is fascinating and delightful, and we know not whether to admire most her enchanting vocal powers, or the sweetness, simplicity, and pathos of her acting. But she is not inspired by Melpomene, and would do well not to attempt the higher flights of the tragic muse.

If these flights are unsuitable to Mademoiselle Jenny Lind, as much are they adapted to her great rival on the opera stage, Madame GRISI. It is impossible to witness the chief parts of this celebrated performer without feeling that, in addition to her extraordinary vocal powers, she is a great tragic actress. Her period of life, figure, and mental temperament render her unsuitable for the expression of the tender passions. She has nothing pastoral or winning in her composition. She is not the person to play Lucia di Lammermoor or the Sonnambula. But in the delineation of the tragic passions—in the expression of jealousy, grief, hatred, anger, or despair—she is supremely great. Her figure, too large for juvenile characters, is admirably adapted

for the dignified matron; her countenance, eminently expressive, portrays all the strongest passions which can agitate the breast; her voice, powerful and melodious beyond example, alternately melts our hearts with the emotions of pity, and thrills them with the agonies of terror. There is nothing that is now, or ever was, on the stage superior to the last scenes of her Norma and Lucretia Borgia.

DIRECT TAXATION

[BLACKWOOD'S MAGAZINE, FEB. 1847]

"FREE TRADE," say the Americans, "is another word for direct taxation, and direct taxation is another word for repudiation of states' debts." The Americans are right; it is so: and the strongest proof of these propositions is to be found in the conduct of the Americans themselves. The subject, however, is one not less interesting on this than on the other side of the Atlantic. It involves the fortune and the temporal prosperity of every man in the kingdom; and we do not hesitate to say that, on the embracing of correct views on this all-important subject by the constituencies of the United Kingdom, the maintenance of the public credit, the upholding of the public prosperity, the ultimate existence of England as an independent nation must come to depend.

We hear much, in the popular phrase of the day, of "great facts." We will assume "free trade" as a "great fact." We will not stop to inquire how it was brought about, or whether, by any means, it could have been avoided. As little shall we stop to ask whether direct or indirect taxation is the best, or whether a mixture of both is to be recommended. We shall not inquire whether it is better to pay taxes on the price of the articles we purchase, when the amount is not perceived, or, if perceived, seldom objected to, at least against Government, and when the disagreeable operation of paying money is compensated, in some degree, by the pleasure derived from the article purchased,—or to pay them at once to the tax-gatherer, when we get nothing for our ample disbursements but a bit of paper from the collector to remind us of

the extent of our losses. As little shall we investigate, from history, how many nations have been ruined by direct taxation, and whether there is one, the decline of which can be traced to indirect; or from reason, whether it is *possible* that a *nation can* be ruined by indirect taxes, when the only effect of their becoming too high is, that they check the consumption of the articles on which they are laid, and therefore cease to be paid. We shall not remind our readers that, in the latter years of the war, £72,000,000, under the protective system, was levied in the shape of taxes amidst general prosperity, on eighteen millions of people in the British empire; and that now, under the free-trade system, £52,000,000 net revenue is felt as extremely oppressive upon twenty-eight millions. We have chosen to have free trade,—in other words, to abandon indirect taxation; and free trade we have, at least for the present, and indirect taxation will in consequence be gradually more and more abandoned.

But it is particularly to be observed, in the outset of this system, that free trade, once adopted and applied to certain great branches of national industry, must necessarily be *progressive*, and embrace *all*, if we would avoid the total ruin of many of the staple branches of our production and main source of our *direct* revenue. In a short time, grain of all sorts will be left with the nominal protection of a shilling a quarter; and many branches of manufactures already find themselves with a protecting duty so small that, keeping in view the difference of the value of money in England and the Continental states, it amounts to nothing. If the classes thus left without any protection, or a merely nominal one, exposed to the effects of foreign competition, are not indemnified for their losses by the diminished price of the articles which they themselves purchase, they must grow poorer every day. Amidst the general cheapening of the articles *sold*, which constitute the income of the productive classes, if there is not a proportional cheapening of the articles *bought*, which compose their *expenditure*, they must inevitably be destroyed.

This truth is so obvious, that it is adapted to the level of every capacity; and accordingly we already see it producing agitation for the further repeal of indirect taxes,

which it does not require the gift of prophecy to foresee will in the end, though perhaps after a severe struggle, prove successful. It may not do so in this session of Parliament, or the next; but, in process of time, the effect is certain.

A ministry in difficulties, a yielding premier, will ere long be found who, in a moment of difficulty, will be glad to buy off one set of assailants, as we did the Danes of old, by giving up what they desire. The separate agitations which must in the end produce this result, are already manifesting themselves. The West India planters allege, with reason, that, exposed as they are, when burdened with costly and irregular free labourers, to the competition of slave labour in Cuba and Brazil, without, in a few years, any protection, it is indispensable that the market of the mother country should be thrown open to them for all parts of their produce, especially in distilleries and breweries. The farmers, exposed to this attack in flank, while the corn laws have been repealed in their front, have no resource left but to clamour incessantly for the repeal of the malt-tax. In this attempt it is probable they will in the end prove successful, not because their demands are either just or reasonable—for, as power is now constituted in this country, that affords no guarantee whatever for being listened to—but because their claims are likely to be supported by the *beer-drinkers in towns*, the constituents of a majority in the House of Commons, and therefore an important and influential class of the community. The tea-dealers, encouraged by the success of agitation in other quarters, are already making a loud clamour for a reduction of the duty on tea, and prepared to prove, to the entire satisfaction of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, that nothing is so likely to increase a branch of revenue now producing £4,800,000 a-year, as to lower the duty from half-a-crown to a shilling on the pound. The tobacco-dealers will not be behind their brethren in agitation; and we may soon expect to see all the venal talent of the nation enlisted in the great cause of free trade in smoking and chewing. The spirit-dealers will, most assuredly, not be the last to insist upon a reduction of the duties affecting them; and they are certain to be supported by the whole of the publicans in the urban constituencies,—a

class of men so numerous that it is certain their united voice is not likely to be long disregarded. Every class, in short, will insist for a remission of the taxes affecting themselves, without the slightest regard to the effect it is likely to have on the revenue, the public credit, or the general security of the empire; and when we reflect on the stupendous array of indirect taxes, exceeding £30,000,000 yearly, which, under the influence of similar partial but fierce agitations, have been abandoned by successive conceding Administrations to purchase temporary popularity, we feel convinced that the time is not far distant when the remaining customs and excise, producing at present about £30,000,000 of revenue, will, in part at least, share the same fate.

It is useless to lament this tendency, because lamentations will not stop it; and the Reform Bill has vested power in classes who, for good or for evil, will work it out. Nearly *two-thirds* of the Imperial Parliament are, under its enactments, the representatives of burghs.* In these burghs, the great majority of the voters are shopkeepers, that is, persons whose interest it is to buy cheap and sell dear. In making the first use of their newly acquired power to force on free trade, and a repeal of all duties affecting themselves, our burghs have exactly followed in the footsteps of their predecessors, when parliamentary writs were first addressed to them by the Earl of Leicester in 1264. "The burghers," says Guizot, "as much astonished as charmed at the importance which Leicester gave them, took advantage of their influence to procure *freedom to trade, and to get quit of all custom-house duties*, instead of establishing, in conjunction with him, the government on a durable foundation."† The influence of these urban constituencies is not likely to decrease under the increasing embarrassments of the landed producers, and the augmented stimulus to certain branches of trade from foreign importations. And, in consequence,

*

	County Members.	Burgh Members.
England,	162	336
Scotland,	30	23
Ireland,	66	39
	258	398

Or as 2 to 3 nearly.

† Guizot's *Essais sur l'Histoire de France*, 475, 476.

as the revenue melts away under the effect of successive repeals of the indirect taxes, the question will ere long force itself on the Government and the country, How is the interest of the debt to be paid? How are the charges of the national establishments to be defrayed? The extraordinary prosperity of the last two years, the result of the three fine harvests which had preceded them, cannot be expected to continue. A railway mania is not immortal; like every other violent passion, it must soon wear itself out.* Peace cannot much longer be relied on; the clouds are already gathering in more than one quarter. A recurrence to general indirect taxes is not to be thought of in these days of restricted currency and unrestricted importation. The only alternative is, either a reduction of the interest of the national debt, or a great increase of direct taxation.

It is not probable that a forcible reduction of the national debt will be attempted, at least till the other alternative has been tried and failed. The public funds are the great savings bank of the nation. Out of 192,970 persons who received the half-yearly dividend at the Bank of England in the year 1841, no less than 158,735 drew dividends under £50 half-yearly, of whom 58,000 were under £5; while those above £50 and not exceeding £200 were only 10,094, and those exceeding £2000 only 125! † This is the great security for the public funds in England—the extent to which shares in them are held by persons composing that middle commercial class, in whom, under the present constitution, supreme power is practically vested.

Nor is it only the actual holders of the public funds who would be immediately struck at by an invasion of the national debt. Stock of every kind would at once fall *pari passu* with the three-per-cents—credit of every kind would be violently shaken—the rate of discount at the Bank of England would instantly rise—money would become scarce over the country—every debtor would find his whole creditors on his back at once, while his means of recovering payment from those indebted to him would be proportionately abated. It is not going too far to say that, within a year after a blow

* How fearfully was this anticipation, written in January 1847, realised in the October of the same year, when the terrible monetary crash took place!

† PORTER'S *Parliamentary Tables*, xii. 6.

had been struck at the public funds, one-half of the whole trading classes would find themselves insolvent. None would be able to stand the shock but those possessed of considerable capital. The majority who carried the measure would, for the most part, be ruined by its effects. This consequence is not a remote or secondary one, which large bodies of men can never be brought to see; it is immediate and direct, and is practically known, by the intercourse with banks, and the necessity of getting bills discounted, to the whole commercial community in the country. It is not probable that the burgher class, to whom the Reform Bill has given power, will voluntarily advocate a measure so evidently and palpably destructive to themselves. The public funds of Great Britain rest on the securest of all bases in a popular community, the self-interest of the holders of power. They would soon be swept away under universal suffrage, as they have been in so many states of America, because the majority under such a system have no funds to hold.

Two things, then, if free trade continue, may be considered as certain as anything depending on the varying chances of human affairs can be. 1. That the indirect taxes, which at present constitute three-fifths of the net revenue of Great Britain, will in great part, in process of time, be swept away. 2. That to uphold the public credit, and save from ruin the commercial classes, a great addition must be made to direct taxation.

It has become, therefore, a matter of the very highest importance to consider how an additional revenue can be raised without widespread ruin in that way; and what are the *principles* on which direct taxation should be founded, in order to be at once equal, just, and productive. It will be found, on consideration, that they are simple and of universal application—so plain as to be obvious, when stated, to every capacity, although a protracted struggle may doubtless be anticipated from the various classes whose immunities or exemptions such a just and equal system may abolish or abridge.

The first principles on the subject will naturally suggest themselves on the principle of "*lucus a non lucendo*," upon considering the gross inequalities, the enormous injustice of our present system of direct taxation. Upon reviewing it,

one can hardly discover under what prevailing interest in the Legislature the regulations have been framed, so strangely is occasional and unjust favour to the landed interest, in some particulars, blended with frequent and equally unjust oppression of them in others—so unequally is undue favour to the middle classes, in some respects, combined with unjust and partial burdens upon them in others.

To begin with one particular, in which the landed interest are greatly and unjustly exempted, while the other classes are severely and unjustly burdened. There is no duty on bequests or inheritance in land, while there is such a duty, and a very heavy one, on movable succession. The legacy duty on succession, from one unconnected with the legatee by blood, is ten per cent; from relations six, and from parents one per cent. By the aid of the probate duty, which must be paid by the executors, and the expense of suing out letters of administration in England, or an edict and confirmation as executor in Scotland, these duties are practically, in most cases, nearly doubled. Succession in land, on the other hand, costs nothing, at least nothing requires to be paid to Government; and though the expense of making up titles to landed estates is often very heavy, that is a burden for the benefit of lawyers, not the good of the state. A poor man who gets a legacy of £100, pays £10 direct to the Exchequer, and the executor, in addition, pays the heavy stamp on probate of the succession; but the great landholder succeeds to £100,000 a-year without paying a shilling to the state. A creditor in Scotland, who succeeds to a bond for £100,000, heritably secured, pays nothing; if it is on personal security, he pays the full legacy duty of £10,000.

This glaring inequality, the remnant of the days of feudal oppression, or the relic of a time when the landholders had no money, and taxes could be extracted from movable property only, should forthwith be abolished. Succession of all kinds, whether in land, bonds heritably secured, or movable funds, should be taxed at the same rate. And by the addition of the vast amount of the landed property to the produce of the succession duty, it would be in the power of Government *to reduce the general tax at least a half* without any diminution, probably with a large increase, in the general

result. This must be at once apparent, when it is recollected that out of £5,303,000, which the income-tax produced in 1845, from Britain, no less than £2,666,000, or nearly a half, came from the land. When it is recollected that the remainder embraced, besides income from realised money, no less than £1,541,000 for professional income, which of course corresponds to a comparatively small amount of realised capital, it is evident how great an increase to the taxable amount of succession this most equitable change would produce. It need hardly be said that the land should pay on so many years' purchase, say thirty in Great Britain, and twenty in Ireland of the *clear rent*, after deducting the interest of mortgages or heritable bonds or jointures. *They* would pay the tax on the succession of their holders respectively. And the distinction as to the lesser amount of the tax to be paid by children and relations, than strangers, now observed in the succession to personal property, should be applied also to landed succession.

This is one obvious burden, which should be applied equally to landed as to any other class of proprietors. But there are several particulars in which they are most unjustly subjected to burdens from which other classes are relieved; and if they get justice done them in this respect, they could well afford to pay the succession duty.

In the first place, the levying of the POOR-RATE as a burden exclusively laid on *real* property in England, that is, lands and houses, to the entire liberation of personal property or professional incomes, is a most monstrous inequality —indefensible on every principle of justice or expedience, and the long continuance of which can only be explained by the well-known and proverbial supineness of that class of men, and their inability to rouse themselves to any combined or general effort, even for matters in which their own vital interests are concerned. The poor-rate, it is well known, is, especially in England, a very heavy burden. It amounted, prior to the late change in the law in England, to above £8,000,000 a-year; and although it was at first considerably reduced in the years immediately succeeding the first introduction of that Act in 1834, yet it has been steadily rising since, and has now nearly

attained its former level.* Under the most favourable circumstances, it cannot be estimated in round numbers at less than £6,000,000 a-year; in seasons of distress it never fails to reach £7,000,000. Scotland hitherto has paid a lower rate, because, under the administration of the old law, the support afforded to the poor was miserably stinted, and quite inadequate to meet their necessities. This was fully exposed by the efforts of Dr Alison, and other distinguished philanthropists; and a parliamentary inquiry having demonstrated the truth of their statements, the Act of 1846 introduced a more humane and careful provision for the poor. Under the operation of this Act, the poor-rate in Scotland has in most places considerably, and in some alarmingly, increased. The dreadful state of Ireland, suffering less under the failure, total as it has been, of the potato crop, than from the general indigent condition of the lower classes, has at length forcibly aroused the attention of all classes in the empire; and it may confidently be predicted that the burden of poor-rates in that country is likely for several years greatly to increase. The poor-rate, therefore, is a subject which already interests deeply, and is likely to interest still more deeply, every part of the empire, and it is of the highest importance to consider what are the principles on which, in conformity with justice and expedience, it should be levied.

The monstrous injustice of the present system will be rendered apparent by a single example. Manufactories, collieries, iron-works, and commercial towns, are, it is well known, the great *producers* of the poor, because they bring together the labouring classes in vast numbers from all quarters while trade is prosperous, and leave them in a state of suffering or destitution, a burden on the landholders, the moment it becomes depressed. The commercial classes, too, are immediately and directly benefited by the labour of these manufacturing poor while they retain their health; while the landholders in their vicinity are only so indirectly

* Poor Rate and County Rate.		Poor Rate and County Rate.		Poor Rate and County Rate.	
1832	L.8,662,000	1843	L.7,085,595	1846	L.6,800,623
1833	8,279,217	1844	6,848,717	1847	6,964,825
1834	8,338,079	1845	6,791,086	1848	7,817,436
1842	6,552,800				

—*Parl. Paper*, PORTER, xii. 247; and *Poor-law Report*, 1849.

and in a lesser degree. This is decisively demonstrated by the colossal fortunes so frequently made among the commercial classes, contrasted with the declining circumstances or actual insolvency of the landholders by whom they are surrounded. Do these, the merchants and manufacturers, pay the larger proportion of the poor-tax, thus rendered inevitable by the nature of their operations, which are in so high a degree beneficial to themselves? Quite the reverse: they do not, in proportion to their profits, pay a *tenth part* of its amount. The poor-rate, as at present levied, is on the rural proprietors an *Income*, on burgh inhabitants a *House* tax. The difference is prodigious, and leads to results in practice of the grossest injustice.

A landowner has an estate of £2000 a-year in a parish of which the poor-rate is 1s. in the pound, or £100 a-year on his property. A manufactory is established, or an iron-work set agoing, or a coal-mine opened upon it, from which the fortunate owner derives, in prosperous times, £50,000 a-year of profit. The buildings on it, however, are only valued at £2000 a-year. He pays for his *pauper-creating* work, yielding him £50,000 a-year, £100 annually, the same sum as the landowner in the same parish pays for his *pauper-feeding* estate of £2000 a-year. In other words, in proportion to the respective incomes, the landholder, who had no hand in bringing in the poor, and derives little or nothing from their labour, pays just *five-and-twenty times* as much as the manufacturer who introduced them, and is daily making a colossal fortune by their exertions! And this becomes the more unjust when it is recollected, that under the present system of free trade in corn and easy communication with distant quarters which railways and steamboats afford, the little benefit the neighbouring landholders formerly derived from the presence of such manufacturing crowds, is fast disappearing. But further, the manufacturer or mine-owner having got off thus easily during the time of prosperous trade, when he was realising his fortune, stops his works, and discharges his workmen when the adverse season arrives. The rateable value of the manufactory or the mine has, for the present, almost or wholly disappeared, and the poor starving workmen are handed over to be supported by the landowner.

Persons not practically acquainted with these matters may think this statement is overcharged: on the contrary, it is in some instances *within* the truth. We know an instance of a company of great iron-masters, whose profits, in prosperous years, average above £100,000 a-year, who pay less poor-rates for the poor they have mainly created, than a landholder in the same parish, of £2000 a-year, who never brought a pauper on its funds in his life. Such is the consequence of the present barbarous system of levying the poor-rate as an *income tax* on the landlords who are burdened with paupers, and only as a *house tax* on the manufacturers who create, and profit by them. The first thing to be done towards the introduction of a just system of direct taxation is to lay the maintenance of the poor equally on all classes; the first step towards which is to abolish the present unjust system of making the poor-rate only a house tax on the producers of poor in towns, and an income tax on their feeders in the country.

The Land Tax is another burden, exclusively affecting real property, which should either be abolished altogether, or its amount levied equally on all classes. Its amount is not so great as the poor-rate; nevertheless it is considerable, as it produces about £1,172,000 a-year.*

The whole Assessed Taxes, though not avowedly and exclusively laid on the landed interest, are, practically speaking, and in reality, a burden on them almost entirely; at least they are so much heavier on the landowners than the inhabitants of towns, that the burden is nothing in comparison on urban citizens. Had they been practically felt as a grievance by the urban population, they would long since have shared the fate of the house tax and been abolished. They have so long been kept up only because, with a few exceptions, they press almost exclusively upon that passive and supine class of landlords, the natural prey of Chancellors of the Exchequer, whom it seems generally impossible by any exertions, or the advent of any danger how urgent soever, to rouse to any common measure of defence. It no doubt sounds well to say that the assessed taxes are laid chiefly on luxuries, and therefore they are paid equally by all classes which

* Porter's *Parl. Tables*, xii. 36.

indulge in them. But a closer examination will show that this view is entirely fallacious, and that the subjects actually taxed, though really luxuries to urban, are necessary aids to rural life. For example, a carriage, a riding-horse, a coachman, a groom, are really luxuries in town, and their use may be considered as a fair test of affluent, or at least easy circumstances. But in the country they are absolute necessaries. They are indispensable to business, to health, to mutual communication, to society, to existence. What similarity is there between the situation of a merchant with £1000 a-year, living in a comfortable town house, with an omnibus driving past his door every five minutes, a stand of cabs within call, and dining three days in the week at a club where he needs no servants of his own; and a landholder enjoying the same income, living in a country situation, with no neighbour within five miles, and having six miles to ride or drive to the nearest town or railway station where his business is to be transacted, or where a public conveyance can be reached?

Gardeners, park-keepers, foresters, and the like, are generally not the ministers of luxury in the country; they are a necessary part of an establishment which is to turn the land to a profitable use. You might as well tax operatives in mills, or miners in collieries, or mechanics in manufactories, as such servants. Yet they are all swept into the assessed taxes, upon the rude and unfounded presumption that they are, equally with a large establishment of men-servants in towns, an indication of affluent circumstances. The window tax is incomparably more oppressive in country houses than in town ones, from their greater size in general, and being, for the most part, constructed at a period when, before the tax was laid on, no attention was paid to the number of windows. Taking all these circumstances into view, it is not going too far to assert that, on equal fortunes, the assessed taxes are *twice as heavy* in the country as in towns; and that of £3,312,000 which they produce annually, after deducting the land tax, about £2,500,000 is paid by *landowners either in town or country.* It is inconceivable—no one *a priori* could credit it—how few householders in town,

not being landowners, pay any assessed taxes at all—or any of such amount as to be really a burden. The total number of houses charged to the window tax in Great Britain is 447,000, and the duty levied on them is £1,613,774, or, at an average, about £3, 10s. a house, while the number of inhabited houses was, in 1841, 3,464,000, or above seven times the number. The total number of persons charged with one man-servant is only 49,320, and *of those keeping men-servants at all*, 110,849*—facts indicating how extremely partial is the operation of these taxes, and how severely they fall on the classes most heavily burdened in other respects, and therefore least able to bear them.

The Highway Rates are another burden exclusively affecting land, although the whole community derive benefit from their use. This burden, exclusive of the sum levied at turnpike gates, in England amounted to £1,169,891 a-year.† This charge, heavy as it is, is felt as the more vexatious, that the rate-payers are not at liberty either to limit the use of the road, for which they pay, to themselves, or to allow it to fall into disrepair. An indictment of the road lies at common law, if it becomes unfit for traffic, even at the instance of any party using the road though he does not pay any part of the rate. In other words, the neighbouring landholders are compelled to keep up the roads for the benefit of the public generally, who contribute nothing towards their maintenance. This matter becomes the more serious that, in consequence of the general adoption and immense spread of railways, the traffic on the principal lines of road in England has either in a great degree disappeared, or become inadequate to contributing anything material to the support even of the turnpikes hitherto entirely maintained by them. It is not difficult to foresee that the time is not far distant when nearly the *whole of the great roads of England will fall as a burden on the rate-payers*; for these roads cannot be abandoned, or the country off the railway lines would have no communication at all. And the sums paid by railway companies, how large soever, to landholders, afford no general compensation; for they benefit a few in the close vicinity of the railways only, while the highway rate affects all.

* Porter's *Parl. Tables*, xii. 37, 42; and xi. 275.

† *Lords' Report on Burdens on Real Property*, 1846, p. 6.

The Church Rate is another burden exclusively affecting land, though all classes benefit by it in the comfort and convenience of churches. It amounted in 1839, the last year for which a return was made, to £506,512.* Nothing can be clearer than that this is a burden truly affecting real estates. It is entirely different from tithes, which are not, correctly speaking, a burden on land, but a separate estate apart from that of the landlord, which never was his, for which he has given no valuable consideration. But on what principle of justice is the burden of upholding churches exclusively laid on the land, when all classes sit in churches, and enjoy the benefit of their accommodation? The thing is evidently and palpably unjust, and won't bear an argument.

The Police, Lunatic Asylum, and Bridge Rates constitute another burden on real property to which no other property is subject, which, though not universally introduced, are very oppressive in those counties where their establishment has been found necessary. Mr Blamire, a very competent witness, estimates these incidental and partial charges at 2s. 1d. an acre.† The land is still liable also to a heavy disbursement on account of the militia, if that national force should be again called out. There has been no return yet laid before parliament of these partial burdens on land, but they cannot be estimated at less than the church rate, or £500,000 a-year.

The Stamp Duties, from deeds and instruments, which produce annually £1,646,000 a-year, fall, for the most part, as a burden on real property. This must be evident to every person who considers that real estates in land or houses are the great security on which money is advanced in every part of the country, and the extremely heavy burdens, in the shape of a direct payment to government for the requisite stamps for deeds, is imposed on the transmission and burdening of such property. It is particularly severe, in proportion to the value of the subjects burdened, in the mortgaging or alienating of small freeholds or heritable subjects. It is stated in the Lords' Report on the burdens affecting real property, "The stamp on a conveyance of a certain length, on a sale of real subjects of the value of £50, would cost 12½ per cent, or £6, 10s.; on a £100 sale, 5 per cent; on a £200 sale, 2½ per cent;

* *Lords' Report on Burdens on Real Property*, 1846, p. 6. † *Ibid.*, p. 7.

on a £500 sale, to £1, 14s. 3d. per cent ; and above that sum, to one per cent." The weight on the establishment of mortgages, especially on small sums, is not less remarkable. The same report adds, "A mortgage for £50 costs, in stamps and law expenses, 30 per cent ; a mortgage for £100, 20 per cent ; one for £450, 7 per cent ; for £1500 3 per cent ; for £12,500 1 per cent ; for £25,000, 15s. per cent ; and for £100,000 12s. per cent."* These burdens on the sale or mortgaging of real property are felt as the more oppressive, when it is recollected that movable property to the greatest amount, as in the public funds, or the like, may be alienated or burdened in the most valid and effectual manner for the cost of a power of attorney, which is a guinea, and half-a-crown per cent to the broker who executes the transaction. Materials do not exist for separating exactly the deed-stamps falling as a burden on land transmissions and mortgages, from those affecting personal estates ; but it is certainly within the mark to say, that they are three-fourths of the whole stamp-duties on deeds and instruments, or £1,200,000 a-year.

Thus it appears that, setting aside the tithe, as not the landowner's property, and therefore a separate estate, and not, properly speaking, a burden on land ; and saying nothing of the malt-tax, which produces annually £4,500,000 a-year, on the supposition that, at present at least, that falls as a burden on the consumer ; and saying nothing of the income-tax, which, as will immediately appear, falls as a much severer burden on land-rents than commercial incomes, —these distinct, clear, and indisputable burdens laid on land, from which property of other sorts in England are exempt, stand thus :—

I. Poor-rate in 1845, a very prosperous year,	£6,847,205
II. Land-tax,	1,164,042
III. Highway Rates,	1,169,891
IV. Church Rates,	506,812
V. Police, Lunatic, and Bridge rates, estimated,	500,000
VI. Excess of assessed taxes falling on land above personal estates, estimated,	1,500,000
VII. Stamp-duties peculiar to land,	1,200,000
	£12,887,95

The rental of real property in England, rated to the poor-rates, is £62,540,030 ;† but the real rental, as ascertained

* *Lords' Report on Burdens on Real Property*, 1847, p. 8. † *Ibid.* p. 7.

by the more rigid and accurate returns for the income-tax, is £85,802,735. On the first of these sums, the taxes exclusively falling on land amount to a tax of *twenty-five*, on the last of eighteen per cent annually. This is an *addition* to the income-tax, and all the indirect taxes which the owners of land and houses pay in common with all the rest of the community, and which by it are complained of as so oppressive.

Enough, it is thought, has now been said to prove the extreme inequality and injustice with which direct public burdens are levied in this country, and the necessity for a thorough and searching revision of our system of taxation in this respect; especially since, from the way in which the tide sets, it has become so evident that direct will progressively be more extensively substituted for indirect taxation. But, in addition to these, there are several other circumstances which aggravate fourfold the burdens thus exclusively laid on real property.

I. In the first place, the alterations in the monetary system of the country, by the resumption of cash payments in 1819, followed up in Scotland and Ireland, as well as England, by the stringent Bankers' Act of 1844, has added fully forty per cent to the weight of all taxes and other burdens, public or private, affecting landed property; because it has increased to that extent the value of money, and diminished the price of the articles of rural produce from which the landholders' means of paying them are derived. If the prices of wheat and of all other kinds of agricultural produce, for ten years before 1819, and ten years before 1845, be compared,* it will at once appear that the difference

* Prices of wheat, average, per Winchester quarter, in the years after mentioned, viz:—

	s.	d.		s.	d.
1809	78	11	1834	46	2
1810	103	3	1835	39	4
1811	92	5	1836	38	6
1812	122	8	1837	56	10
1813	106	6	1838	64	7
1814	72	1	1839	70	8
1815	63	8	1840	66	4
1816	76	2	1841	64	4
1817	94	0	1842	64	6
1818	83	8	1843	54	4
1819	72	3	1844	51	3
Average	87	3	Average	56	5

Tooke *on Prices*, ii. 389, and *Lords' Report on Burdens on Real Property*, App. No. 26.

is even greater than has been here stated. But that consideration is of vital importance in this question, for if the price of all kinds of rural produce has declined nearly as nine to six by the operation of these monetary changes, the weight of debts and taxes, of course, must have been increased in the same proportion. We are not now to enter into any argument as to the expedience or necessity of that great change in our monetary system : we assume it as *a fact*, and refer to it only as rendering imperative a revision of the direct taxes bearing so heavily on the great interests whose means of paying them have been thus so seriously abridged.

II. In the second place, and this is a most important circumstance, the burdens which have been mentioned all fall on the landowner, how much soever his property may be charged with mortgages, jointures, or other real burdens. These must all be paid in full by himself alone, how small soever be the fraction of the nominal income of his estate which remains to him after discharging the annual amount of its real burdens. There is no right to deduct poor-rates, land-tax, or other burdens affecting land, from mortgages, or even jointure holders, unless they are expressly declared liable to such, which is very seldom the case. These annual charges must all be paid *clear* to the creditor, without any deduction, except that of the income-tax, which the debtor is allowed to retain by the Act imposing it. But this consideration is of vital importance to the landholders when the amount of their mortgages and other real burdens is taken into consideration. Their annual amount has been estimated, by very competent judges, at *two-thirds* of the income derived from land ; although, as there is no general record in England for real burdens, their amount cannot at present be accurately ascertained. But take it, in order to be within the mark, at *three-fifths* of the real rental as ascertained by the income-tax returns, these show, as already stated, an income of £85,000,000 annually derived from land. Take three-fifths, or £51,000,000 of this sum, as absorbed annually by mortgagees and annuitants holding real and preferable securities over land, and there will remain £34,000,000 annually to the holders of land and houses. Now on this

£34,000,000 the real burdens above mentioned, amounting to £12,900,000 a-year, are fastened. If to these be added the income-tax paid by the land, amounting, by the income-tax returns, to £2,112,000, the clear income derived by landholders from the real property of England, with the *direct* taxes paid by them, will stand thus—

Clear Income as above		£34,000,000
Deduct direct taxes levied exclusively on land	£12,900,000	
Income-tax paid by land . . .	2,700,000	
		15,600,000
Remains,		£19,600,000

Thus it appears that, out of thirty-four millions of clear rental left to the owners of real property in England, above fifteen millions, or nearly *a half*, is taken from them annually in the shape of direct taxes which they cannot by any possibility avoid! How long would the commercial or urban industry of England stand direct taxes to the amount of 46 per cent on their clear income? If that had been the state of their finances, we should have had no clamour in 1831 for enlarged representation, or in 1846 for the destruction, to their advantage, of all the protection to other branches of industry. We should have had no Anti-Corn-Law League subscriptions of £100,000 to buy up all the venal talent in the form of itinerant orators and pamphleteers in the country. We should have had no sudden changes of national policy from a pressure which it was said could not be withstood. In social, not less than military warfare, the longest purse carries the day; and the party which is the heaviest burdened is sure to be in the end overthrown.

III. The abolition of the Corn Laws, partially at present, entirely at the end of two years and a half, by the bill of 1846, not only has made this enormous burden of 46 per cent on their clear income, *deductis debitis*, a permanent load on the landowners, but it has rendered it a hopeless one, because it has destroyed every means which they previously might have possessed of indemnifying themselves for its weight, by sharing its oppression with other classes. This is a matter of the very highest importance, which will soon make itself felt, though, in consequence of the nearly total failure of the potato crop in the west of Great Britain

and Ireland, it has not yet been so. The usual resource of persons who are burdened with heavy payments to government, is to lay as much as they can of it on others, by enhancing as much as possible the price of their produce. It is in this way that indirect taxes fall in general on the consumer ; and it is on this principle that, in estimating the burdens exclusively affecting land, we have not included the malt duty, because it is in great part at least paid by the consumers of beer or porter. But, of course, if it becomes from any cause impossible for the party burdened, in the first instance, to raise the price of his produce—or if, on the contrary, he is compelled to lower it—*the whole tax will fall direct on himself*, because he will be without the means of laying it on the purchaser from him.

Now, the abolition of the Corn Laws has done this. In two years and a half the whole grain of Poland and America will be admitted into the English market at the nominal duty of a shilling a quarter. It will be impossible for the farmers and landowners after that to keep up the price of grain of any sort in the British market beyond the prices in Prussia, and with the addition of 5s. a quarter for the cost of transit, and perhaps half as much for the profit of the importer. *Wheat, beyond all question, will fall on an average of years to forty shillings a quarter, barley and oats to twenty.* This is just as certain as the parallel reduction of average prices of wheat from 87s. a quarter to 56s. has been by the money law of 1819. Accordingly, now that the stress is over, and they have no longer an interest to conceal or pervert the truth, the Anti-Corn-Law journals are the first to proclaim this result *as certain;* and they coolly recommend the English farmers to abandon altogether the cultivation of wheat, which can no longer be expected to pay, and to lay out their lands in pasture grass and the producing of *garden stuffs.* But amidst this general and now admitted decline in the price of grain, the 46 per cent of direct burdens on land will continue unchanged ; happy if it does not receive a large augmentation. The effect of this will be to augment the weight of the burdens to which they are already subjected on the landholders by at least twenty per cent, and, in addition, to *throw upon them the whole malt-tax,* now amounting to £4,500,000 a-year. The moment the

British farmer is obliged to lower the price of his barley to the level of the Continental nations, where labour is so much cheaper, and rents comparatively light, the whole malt-tax falls, without deduction or limitation, on British agriculture.

IV. The income-tax, though apparently a burden equally affecting all classes, in reality attaches with much more severity to the landed than to any other class. There is, indeed, an advantage unduly enjoyed by capitalists of all sorts, landed or moneyed, in comparison with annuitants or professional men, which, as will immediately appear, loudly calls for a remedy. But, as compared with the merchant or moneyed man, who derives his income from trade or realised capital in a movable form, the landholder is, in every direct taxation, exposed to a most serious disadvantage. His income cannot be concealed, and it is returned by others than himself. The farmer or tenant, who has no interest in the matter, returns his landlord's rent. The trader, shopkeeper, or merchant estimates and returns his own income. The possessions of the first, and their annual rental, are universally known, and concealment as to them is impossible or sure of detection; the gains of the last are entirely secret, and wrapped up, even to the owner, in books or accounts, generally unintelligible—in all cases but those of considerable merchants—to all but the persons who prepare them. Whoever is practically acquainted with human nature will at once perceive the immense effect which this difference must have on the amount of the burden, in appearance the same, as it affects the different classes of society.

And the result of this difference appears in the most decisive manner from the income-tax returns. From them it appears that the contributions from commerce, trades, and professions of *all sorts*, are not *quite half* of those obtained from landed property. The amount of the latter is, in round numbers, £2,700,000; of the former, £1,500,000.* But

* Net amount of income-tax for year ending 5th April 1845:—

	England.	Scotland.	Total.
Schedule A, Land rents .	£2,112,072	£253,976	£2,366,048
——— B, Tenants . .	292,646	22,961	315,607
——— C, Annuities, funds, &c.	766,066	...	766,066
——— D, Trades and professions	1,424,017	117,953	1,541,970
——— E, Offices, pensions, &c.	305,401	8,500	313,901
	£4,900,202	£403,390	£5,303,502

let it be recollected that the £1,541,000 a-year, which in 1845 was paid by "trades and professions," included, besides the payments of merchants and traders those of the whole class of professional men not traders—as lawyers, attorneys, physicians, &c. At the very lowest computation, their share of this must amount to £341,000 a-year. There remains then £1,200,000 as the contribution of trade and commerce of all kinds from Great Britain, while that from land is £2,681,000 a-year, or *considerably more than double.* Can it be believed that this is founded on a fair return of incomes by the commercial classes? Are they prepared to admit that their property and income, and consequent interest and title to sway in the state, is *not half of that which is derived from land?* Or do they shelter themselves under the comfortable assurance that their real income is incomparably greater, and that they quietly escape with a half or a third of the income-tax which they ought to pay? We leave it to the trading class, and their abettors in the press, to settle this question with the commissioners of income-tax throughout the country. We mention the fact, that trade and commerce do not pay half the income-tax that land does, as a reason, among the many others which exist, for a thorough and radical reform of our financial system, so far as direct taxation is concerned.

Whoever considers seriously, and in an impartial spirit, the various particulars which have now been stated, will not only cease to wonder at the frequent, it may almost be said universal, embarrassment of the landed proprietors, but he will arrive at the conclusion that, if the burdens upon them continue much longer unchanged, they must terminate in their general ruin. We say *general* ruin, because it will not be universal. The *great* landowners, the magnates, whether moneyed or territorial, of the land will alone survive the general wreck. They will, by degrees, swallow up all the smaller estates in their neighbourhood; and it will come to be literally true in Britain what was said by a Roman emperor of Gaul in the decline of the empire, "That the estates of the rich go on continually increasing, and absorbing all lesser estates around them, till they come to the estate of *another as rich as themselves.*" With direct taxes, amounting to 50 or 60 per cent

on the disposable income, which, under the change of prices induced by the change in the corn laws, they will very soon be, even without any addition from farther taxes, it is wholly impossible that any landowner who does not possess enormous tracts of country, or vast funded or moneyed property in addition to his territorial possessions, can avoid insolvency. What the effect of the total destruction of the middle class of British landholders must be on the balance of the constitution, and the state of society in these islands, it is not our present purpose to inquire. Suffice it to say, that it is precisely the state of things which signalised the later stages of the Roman empire, and coincides with so many other circumstances in marking the striking analogy between our present condition and that which proved fatal to the ancient masters of the world.

Well may the Lords' Committee on the burdens affecting landed property have said, "Neither the law nor the spirit of the constitution originally contemplated so partial a system of taxation."* In truth, originally some of the heaviest present exclusive burdens on real property were borne equally by personal estates. "The poor-law of Elizabeth," says the report, "and the land-tax of William and Mary, *embraced every species of income;* but in consequence of the comparative facility of rating visible property, and the small amount of income derived from other sources in the early period of their assessment, personality seems to have escaped its legal share of contribution to the public service. The liability of stock in trade, however, was continued by law to a late period, and is, up to the present day, only suspended by an annual act of exemption.' The Committee here point out, or rather hint at, the real cause of the extraordinary exemption from their due share of the public burdens which has grown up insensibly in favour of movable property. Land has two admirable qualities in the estimation of Chancellors of the Exchequer. It can *neither be concealed nor removed.* Movable estates, stock in trade, are susceptible of both. The landholder has no secret invisible funds which he can bring forth, when desired, in the form of convenient loans to Government to meet the state necessities. He has only a visible fixed estate, which can

* *Report*, p. 9.

neither be concealed nor withdrawn from its annual burdens, and is not likely to be melted into a loan. Hence the influence and exemptions of the one, and the injustice experienced by, and burdens of, the other.

But in addition to this, there is another circumstance which has powerfully contributed to establish this extraordinary and iniquitous exemption of personal property from direct taxation. This is the difficulty, which in practice amounts to an impossibility, of getting by any means at the real amount of rateable personal property. The commissioners of the income-tax through the country will have no difficulty in understanding what is here meant. All the efforts of Government and their official organs, to ascertain the real amount of assessable movable property, have been insufficient to accomplish that end. Doubtless there are in the commercial and professional class many just and honourable men who give a true account to the last farthing of their gains. These are men, the honour and support of the country, whose word is their bond, and who may confidently be relied on to speak the truth under any circumstances. But, unhappily, experience has too clearly proved that the facility of concealing gains derived from stock in trade, and thus withdrawing it from its just liability for assessment, is too strong a temptation to be resisted by great numbers in the same line of life. The proof of this is decisive, and has been already given from a comparison of the income-tax, derived from land, and from trades and professions.* Is it possible to believe that the whole commercial and trading classes in Great Britain, whose wealth is in every direction purchasing up the estates of the landed proprietors in the island, only enjoy forty out of one hundred and seventy-five millions of the rateable national income? Have they less than a fourth of the whole income rated to the income-tax? If they have no more, they certainly make a good use of what they have, and must deem themselves singularly fortunate in that happy exemption from taxation which has enabled them, with less than a fourth of the general income, to get the command of the state, and buy up the properties of all the other classes.

There is one peculiarity in the income-tax, as at present

* See page 616.

established, which is productive of the greatest injustice, and loudly calls for immediate remedy. This consists in the taxing *all incomes at the same rate*, whether derived from professional income, annuity, land, or realised funds. This is just another instance of the careless and reckless way in which our system of direct taxation has at different times been framed, without any regard to principle, and alternately unjustly favouring or grossly oppressing every class in society, *except the great capitalists*. They have been always and unduly considered. What can be more unjust than to tax every man of the same income at the same rate, whether it is derived from land or funded property, worth thirty years' purchase, or railway or bank stock worth twenty, or an annuity worth five, or a precarious professional income, which would not bring, from the uncertainty of life and the public favour, or the winds, or monetary changes, above *two or three?* Under the present most unjust system, they all pay alike on their income—that is, some pay about FIFTEEN TIMES as much on what they are worth in the world in comparison with others! A man who derives £300 a-year from the three-per-cents or land has a capital stock worth about £10,000. He pays as much, and no more, as a poor widow, just dropping into the grave, who has a jointure of £300 a-year, for which no insurance company in the kingdom would give her above £500, or a hard-working lawyer or country surgeon with the same income, whose chances of life and business are not worth three years' purchase. The gross injustice of this inequality requires no illustration.

Nor is it any answer to this to say, that if the professional and commercial classes are unduly oppressed by the income-tax, they are proportionally benefited by their general exemption from the heavy direct taxation which in other respects weighs down the land; and that the one injustice may be set off against the other. We protest against the system of setting off one injustice against another: there is no compensation of evils in an equitable administration. In the present instance there can be no compensation, for the acts of injustice are committed against different classes. It is the trading classes which enjoy the means, from the occult nature of their gains, of evading, by fallacious returns, the

income-tax. The honest and honourable pay it to the last farthing: it is the *dishonest* who escape. The persons upon whom the levying the income-tax in its present form operates with the most cruel severity are the professional men and annuitants. They cannot evade it, as the trading classes can. Their gains are generally known: if they are at all eminent or prosperous, the kindness or envy of the public generally helps them to at least a half more than they really enjoy. Merchants or shopkeepers are less in the public eye; and even when most prominent, their transactions are so various and widespread, that no one but themselves can estimate their profits. Every one knows, or can easily guess, what Dr Chambers or the Attorney-general make a-year; but it would puzzle the most experienced heads on 'Change to say what were the yearly profits of the great bankers, merchants, and manufacturers.

There is another enormous injustice connected with the income tax, and, indeed, all the direct taxes to government, which loudly calls for remedy—*Ireland pays none of them.* It is high time that England and Scotland should rouse themselves to a sense of this most unreasonable and unjust exemption, and unite their strength by the proper constitutional means to remove it. We are always told Ireland cannot afford to pay any direct taxes. What, then, comes of its £12,000,000 of rental? Scotland, with little more than *a third* of that land-rent, pays it and the assessed taxes besides, without either complaint or difficulty. But it is said the landlords are so eaten up with mortgages, that they have not a fourth part of their nominal incomes left to live upon. That is a good reason for only making them pay, as under the income-tax they would, on the free balance, *deductis debitis.* But, in the name of Heaven, why should the bondholders pay nothing? If they sit at home at ease in Dublin, Cork, or Belfast, and quietly enjoy £9,000,000 out of the £12,000,000 of Irish rental, why cannot *they* as well pay the income-tax as their brethren in London, Liverpool, or Glasgow? The bondholders of Ireland *alone* would, if they paid an income-tax, contribute more to the common necessities of the State than *the whole land and industry of Scotland put together.* So vast are the natural resources which Providence has bestowed on

that fickle and misguided people, and so few those enjoyed by the hardy and industrious Scotch mountaineers.

On what conceivable ground of justice or reason can this most monstrous and invidious exemption in favour of Ireland from income and assessed taxes be defended? Is it that Ireland, with its 12,000,000 arable acres, and 5,000,000 of mountain and waste, has fewer natural resources than Scotland, with its 4,500,000 of arable acres, and 12,000,000 of mountain and waste? Is it that 8,500,000 persons now in Ireland cannot pay even what 2,900,000 now pay in Scotland? Is it that Ireland is so singularly peaceable and loyal, and gives so little anxiety or disquiet to the rest of the empire, that it must be rewarded for its admirable and dutiful conduct by an absolute exemption from all direct taxation to government? Is it that the troops required to be kept in it are so few, and in Scotland so numerous, that the former country may be liberated from taxation, while the latter is subjected to it in full extent? Is it that industry in towns in Ireland is so great, and manufacturing skill so transcendant, that it is entitled to be liberated from direct taxation in consideration of the vast amount of its indirect custom-house duties, in comparison of which those of London, yielding £12,000,000; of Liverpool, yielding £4,500,000 a-year; or Glasgow and the Clyde harbours, yielding £1,200,000; and Leith, yielding £589,000, are as nothing? Or is it that this extraordinary exemption is the reward of tumult, disaffection, and treason; of turbulent demagogues and factious priests, and an indolent people; of active and incessant combination for the purposes of evil, and total inability to combine for the purposes of good? And is it the first-fruits of the regeneration of government by the Reform Bill, that it can raise a revenue only from the loyal and pacific and industrious part of the empire, and must proclaim relief from all taxation as the reward of tumult, disorder, murder, monster meetings, and treason? We leave it to the advocates of the present system of government, or those who established it, to answer these questions. We did neither the one nor the other, but have constantly opposed both; and Great Britain, in the system of direct taxation we have now exposed, is reaping the fruits of the changes she has thought proper to introduce.

Lastly, there is another peculiarity of the income-tax which requires revision, and that is this,—at present it descends only to £150 a-year income; and every one practically acquainted with these matters, knows that this, with the trading classes at least, whose gains can be concealed, amounts to a practical exemption, generally speaking, of all under at least £200 a-year. Nothing can be plainer than that, as matters stand at present, this exemption of all below such a line is invidious, unjust, and, if persisted in, will lead to ruinous consequences. No reason can be assigned for it which will bear examination; for it is to be supposed the practical necessity of conciliating the ten pounders, the great majority of whom escape the tax altogether in this way, will not, in public at least, be assigned as a reason, how cogent soever it may be felt and candidly acknowledged in private. Why should a man, whose income, perhaps derived from land or funded property below £150, pay nothing, while a hardworking clerk, attorney, or country surgeon, if honest in his return, who makes £155, and is not worth a tenth part of the other's realised capital, pays *income-tax*? It is in vain to say you must draw a line somewhere. So you must, but you must not draw it in a way to do gross and palpable injustice,—to exempt the comparatively affluent, and oppress the industrious poor. There is a vital distinction, which it would be well if the income-tax recognised, between income, of any amount, derived from realised property and from professional exertions. By all means give the humble professional classes the benefit of this distinction. But to draw the line, not according to the *quality* of the income as derived from capital or labour, but from its *absolute amount*, is arbitrary, invidious, and unjust.

The great advantage to be derived from making the income-tax, modified as now suggested, descend lower in society is, that it would *interest a larger number in guarding against its abuse.* At present, it is said, there are three hundred and twenty thousand persons rated to the income-tax in Great Britain, but not half of them really pay on *their own account. Many* pay the income-tax of *one;* as a landlord's whole tenants for his rent, though not more than one or two, perhaps none, certainly not half the number, are separate persons whose incomes are really made liable. But

can anything be more unjust than to select in this way a particular class, not more than a *two-hundredth* part of the community, and subject them, and *them alone,* to the heaviest of the direct taxes? It is just the privileged class of old France over again, with this difference, that the privileged class in England is distinguished by being obliged *to bear* not to *avoid,* the hated *taille.* Nevertheless, nothing is more certain than that, as long as this invidious and unjust accumulation of the whole direct tax is on one class of 150,000 persons, it will be highly popular with the remaining 29,000,000, and that the popular journals will never cease to resound with the propriety of extending still farther the *partial* burden of direct, and the *general exemption* under the name of Free Trade from the indirect taxes.

The increase of direct taxation, till it proved fatal to industry, population, national strength, and everything save great capital, was the cause of the ruin of the Roman empire. Many circumstances, alas! concur in showing, and will ere long demonstrate to the most inconsiderate, that we are fast following in the same direction; and if so, we shall beyond all question share the same fate. The extension of the income-tax, on a graduated scale, to persons as low even as £50 a-year, is the only way to arrest this great and growing evil. What is wanted is not the money to be drawn from these poorer but more numerous classes, but the *interesting them in resisting* its undue extension. If 150,000 persons only pay the income-tax, it is very likely ere long to be raised to 10 or 15 per cent. *If a million pay it, no such extension need be dreaded.* No matter though the additional 850,000 pay only 10s. a piece, or £425,000 in all: their doing so would probably save the state from ruin. What is wanted is not their money, but their breath; not their contributions, but their clamour. They have a majority of votes in the constituencies. In a serious conflict, their voice would be decisive in favour of any side they espoused. Interested to prevent the confiscation of property, they will effectually do so. Exempted from direct taxation, they will promote its increase till it has swallowed up the state, and themselves in its ruin, as it did the Roman empire.

So much has been said on the inequalities and injustice of the present system of direct taxation established in Great

Britain, that little room remains for the true principles on the subject; but fortunately, like a beacon, it shows what rock should be avoided in the course. A system of direct taxation would not be far from just, which in every respect was precisely the reverse of that which at present exists amongst us.

I. The first thing to be done is to equalise the succession tax, lay it equally on land and personal estate, and lower it to the whole *one-half*. Five per cent in succession to strangers; two and a half to relations; and a half per cent to parents or brothers, alike in land and money, would probably augment the produce of the tax, and certainly greatly relieve a most meritorious class of society, the representatives of small capitals.

II. All direct taxes should be levied equally on landed and personal estates, and, subject to the distinction aftermentioned, equally on professional income, as on the fruit of realised capital. This rule should apply to all local or parochial, as well as public burdens. The effect of it would be to let in, as taxable income, in addition to the £2,666,000 now derived from land, a sum at least as large derived from personal estates or incomes. It would therefore lower this most oppressive tax, supposing its absolute amount diminished *one-half*. The same would be the case with land-tax, highway rates, church rates, police rates, &c. They would all be lowered a half to the persons at present burdened with them, and that simply by the adoption of the just principle, that all fortunes in the same situation should be taxed alike for the general service of the state, and that the commercial classes who create the poor, and are enriched by their labour, should contribute equally with the landed to their support.

III. In levying the income-tax, a different rate should be imposed on income, according as it is derived or not derived from realised capital. If it is so, it should be taxed alike for all direct taxes. But if it is derived from annuity or professions, a lower rate should be adopted. If the *property* tax is 5 per cent, the *income* tax should not exceed $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent; whatever the one is the other should be *a half* of it only. This modification of an impost now felt as so oppressive by all subjected to it, would go far towards reconciling the numerous class of small traders—the great majority in all urban constituencies, to the change—to its continuance,

and also justify its extension to all incomes above £50 or £100 a-year. Without this extension it will inevitably degenerate into a confiscation of property above a certain level.

IV. Stamps or conveyances, or burdening of property, should be the same, and *not higher*, on personalty or landed estates. For the additional security of the latter, the borrower pays amply in the greater expense of the law deeds requisite to constitute effectual securities over real estates than over stock or movable funds. Stamps on bills, &c., which are advances for a short period only, should be rated at a widely different scale from that adopted in permanent loans. But there is no reason why securities over real estates should require to be written on paper bearing a higher stamp than those over personal effects.

V. The present system of the *assessed taxes* should be altered, so as to make it include all classes alike, and not, as at present, fall twice as heavily on the inhabitants of the country as those of towns. This may be done best by making these taxes a certain proportion of the *value of the house* inhabited by the party, as rated for the property tax —perhaps a fourth or fifth part, abolishing all other assessed taxes. This would reach all classes alike in town and country; for whatever may be said as to doing without an establishment in town, no one can do even there without a house. And the rich misers who live in a poor lodging, and spend nothing, would be effectually reached in the heavy property tax on their funds wherever invested.

VI. To obviate the innumerable frauds daily practised in the concealment of professional incomes, especially by small traders, a power should be given to the commissioners in all cases where they were dissatisfied with the return of professional income, to assess the party for income *at five or six times the value at which his house is rated.* On this principle, if a lawyer or physician lives in a house rated at £100 a-year, he would pay on £500 a-year as income; if he occupied one rated at £2000, he would be taxed on £10,000. If the tax on realised property was 5 per cent, which it will soon be, that would just subject the professional one to $2\frac{1}{2}$. Perhaps it would be better to adopt some such general principle for all cases of professional income, and avoid the *requiring returns at all.*

In some cases the above plan might be adopted as a substitute for the income-tax, or rather as a mode of levying it on *professional* persons. Those whose income is derived from land, the funds, or other realised property, would be entitled to exemption or deduction, upon production of the proper evidence that they were rated for the property tax at the higher rate.

VII. *Ireland* should pay the income and all direct taxes, at least on land, bonds, and other *realised property*, as well as the assessed and other direct taxes, just as Great Britain. Nothing can be advanced, founded either in reason or justice, in favour of the further continuance of the present most invidious and unjust exemption of the *wealthy proprietors or bondholders* in that country. Any exemptions in favour of its infant *industry* would be cheerfully acquiesced in by all the rest of the empire.

We have thus laid before our readers a just and reasonable system of direct taxation, from which the landed interest, now so unjustly oppressed, would derive great relief, simply by doing equal justice to them and the other classes in the state. The amount of injustice which such a system would remove, may be accurately measured by the amount of resistance which the system we have now advocated would doubtless experience, just as the injustice of the exemption from direct taxation enjoyed by the nobles and clergy of old France was measured by the obstinate resistance they made to an equalisation of the public burdens. Men cling to nothing with such a tenacity as unjust privileges and exemptions. But the changes we recommend have one lasting recommendation—they are founded on obvious justice. They go only to levy all taxes alike on all classes, in proportion, as nearly as may be, to their ability to pay them. And we implore the Conservative body, with whom we have so long acted, to consider whether it would not be far wiser to unite their strength to convince the country of the justice and expedience of some, at least, of these changes, than to follow the example of the Free-traders in urging the repeal of the malt-tax, which could only be followed, as no addition to the indirect taxes is to be thought of, by a vast increase of the *income-tax*, two-thirds of which would fall on the land itself.

MACAULAY

[BLACKWOOD'S MAGAZINE, April 1849]

The historical and critical essay is a species of literary composition which has arisen, and been brought to perfection, in the lifetime of a single generation. Preceding writers, indeed, had excelled in detached pieces of a lighter and briefer kind; and in the whole annals of thought there is nothing more charming than some of those which graced the age of Queen Anne, and the reigns of the first Georges. But though these delightful essays remain, and will ever remain, models of the purest and most elegant composition, and are always distinguished by just and moral reflections, yet their influence has sensibly declined; and they are turned to, now, rather from the felicity of the expression by which they are graced, or the delicate satire they convey, than either the information which they contain, the originality by which they are distinguished, or the depth of the views which they unfold. It is still true that "he who would attain an English style, familiar but not coarse, and elegant without being ostentatious, must give his days and his nights to the study of Addison." It is not less true, that he who would appreciate the force of which the English language is capable, and acquire the condensed vigour of expression which enters so largely into the highest kind of composition, will ever study the prose of Johnson; as much as the poet, for similar excellences, will recur to the Vanity of Human Wishes, or the epistles and satires of Pope.

But, with the advent of the French Revolution, the rise of fiercer passions, and the collision of dearer interests, the elegant and amusing class of essays rendered so popular by

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Macaulay's *History of England*, 2 vols. London, 1849.

Addison and his followers passed away. The incessant recurrence of moralising, the frequent use of allegory, the constant straining after conceits, which appear even in the pages of the *Spectator* and the *Rambler*, are scarcely redeemed by the taste of Addison, the fancy of Steele, or the vigour of Johnson. In inferior hands they became insupportable. Men whose minds were stimulated by the Rights of Man—who were entranced by the eloquence of Pitt—who were stunned by the thunderbolts of Nelson—who followed the career of Wellington—could not recur to the Delias, the Chloes, or the Phillises of a slumbering and pacific age. The proclamation of war to the palace and peace to the cottage, sent the stories of the coquette, the prude, and the woman of sense to the right-about. What was now required was something which could minister to the cravings of an excited and enthusiastic age; which should support or combat the new ideas generally prevalent; which should bring the experience of the past to bear on the visions of the present, and tell men, from the recorded events of history, what they had to hope, and what to fear, from the passion for innovation which had seized possession of so large a portion of the active part of mankind.

The *Edinburgh Review* was the first journal which gave a decided indication of this change in the temper of the public mind. From the very outset it exhibited that vigour of thought, fearlessness of discussion, and raciness of expression, which bespoke the prevalence of independent feeling, novel yearnings, and original ideas, among the people. There was something refreshing and exhilarating in the change. Its success was immediate and immense. The long slumbering dominion of the Monthly and other reviews, which then had possession of the sceptre of criticism, was at once destroyed. Mediocrity fell into the shade when the light of genius appeared; criticism assumed a bolder and more decided character, when its writers became independent. Men rejoiced to see the pretensions of authors levelled, their vanity mortified, their errors exposed, their pride pulled down, by the stern hand of the merciless reviewer. The practical application of the maxim, "Judex damnatur cum nocens absolvitur" * gave universal satisfac-

* "The judge is condemned when the guilty is acquitted."

tion. Every one felt his own consequence increased, his personal feelings soothed, his vanity flattered, when the self-constituted teachers of mankind were pulled down from their lofty pinnacle.

But it was not merely in literary criticism that the *Edinburgh Review* opened a new era in our periodical literature. To its early supporters we owe the introduction of the CRITICAL AND HISTORICAL ESSAY, which was an entirely new species of composition, and to the frequent use of which the rapid success of that journal is mainly to be ascribed. The essay always had the name of a book prefixed to it: it professed to be a review. But it was generally a review only in name. The author was frequently never once mentioned in its whole extent. His work was made use of merely as a peg on which to hang a long disquisition on the subject of which it treated. This disquisition was not, like the essays of Addison or Johnson, the work of a few hours' writing, and drawn chiefly from the fancy or imagination of the author: it was the elaborate production of a mind imbued with the subject, and the fruit of weeks or months of careful composition. It was sometimes founded on years of previous and laborious study. Thence its great and obvious value. It not only enlarged the circle of our ideas; it added to the stock of our knowledge. Men came to study a paper on a subject in a review, as carefully as they did a regular work of a known and respectable author: they looked to it not only for amusement, but for information. It had this immense advantage—it was shorter than a book, and often contained its essence. It was distilled thought; it was abbreviated knowledge. To say that many of these elaborate and attractive treatises were founded in error—that they were directed to objects of the moment, not of durable interest, and that their authors too often

> "To party gave up what was meant for mankind"—

is no impeachment either of the ability with which they were executed, or denial of the beneficial ends to which they ultimately became subservient. What though great part of the talents with which they were written is now seen to have been misdirected—of the views they contained to have been erroneous? It was that talent which raised the counter

spirit that righted the public mind; it was those views which ultimately led to their own correction. In an age of intelligence and mental activity, no dread need be entertained of the ultimate sway of error. Experience, the great assertor of truth, is ever at hand to scatter its assailants. It is in an age of mental torpor and inactivity that the chains of falsehood, whether in religion or politics, are abidingly thrown over the human mind.

But from this very cause, the political essays of the *Edinburgh Review* have been left behind by the march of the world; they have been stranded on the shoals of time; they have almost all been disproved by the event. Open one of the political essays in the Blue-and-Yellow, which were read and admired by all the world thirty or forty years ago, and what do you find? Loud declamations against the continuance of the war, and emphatic assertions of the inability of England to contend at land with the conqueror of continental Europe; continual reproaches of incapacity against the Ministry, who were preparing the liberation of Spain and the battle of Waterloo; ceaseless assertions that the misery of Ireland was entirely owing to misgovernment—that nothing but Catholic emancipation, and the curtailment of the Protestant church, were required to make that island the most happy, loyal, and contented realm, and its Celtic inhabitants the most industrious and well-conditioned in Europe; loud denunciations that the power of the crown "had increased, was increasing, and ought to be diminished;" lamentations on the evidently approaching extinction of the liberties of England, under the combined action of a gigantic war expenditure and a corrupt selfish oligarchy; strong recommendations of the speedy abolition of slavery in our West India colonies, as the only mode of enabling our planters to compete with the efforts of the slave-sugar states. Time has enabled the world to estimate these doctrines at their true value. It is not surprising that the *political* essays of a journal, professing such principles, have, amidst great efforts towards bolstering up, and ceaseless strains of party laudation, been quietly consigned by subsequent times to the vault of all the Capulets.

It is on its literary, critical, and historical essays, therefore, that the reputation of the journal now almost entirely rests.

No bookseller has yet ventured on the hazardous step of publishing its political essays together. They will not supplant those of Burke. But it is otherwise with its literary lucubrations. The publication of the collected works of its leading contributors, in a separate form, has enabled the world to form a tolerably correct opinion of their respective merits and deficiencies. Without taking upon ourselves the office of critics, and fully aware of the delicacy which one periodical should feel in discussing the merits of another, we may be permitted to present, in a few words, what appear to us to be the leading characteristics of the principal and well-known contributors to that far-famed journal. This is the more allowable, as some of them have paid the debt of nature, while others are reposing under the shadow of their well-earned laurels, far removed from the heat and bustle of the day. Their names are familiar to every reader; their works have taken a lasting place in English as well as American literature; and their qualities and excellences are so different as at once to invite and suggest critical discrimination.

The great characteristic of Lord Jeffrey is, with some striking exceptions, the fairness and general justice of the criticism which his works exhibit, the kindly feeling which they evince, and the lively illustrations with which they abound. He had vast powers of application. When in great practice at the bar, and deservedly a leading counsel in jury cases, he contrived to find time to conduct the *Edinburgh Review*, and to enrich its pages by above a hundred contributions. There is no great extent of learning in them, few original ideas, and little of that earnestness of expression which springs from strong internal conviction, and is the chief fountain of eloquent and overpowering oratory. He rarely quotes classical, never Italian literature, his knowledge of French is confined to a limited walk of its authors; he is no German; and he seems to have shared in the general imperfection of his country in acquaintance with the Greek tongue. His writings give no token of a mind stored with their imagery. He seldom gives you the feeling that he is serious, or deeply impressed with his subject. He does not always strike with force, but very often touches with felicity. The feeling which pervades his writings is generally

excellent, often generous ; his taste is correct, his criticism, for the most part, just ; and it is impossible not to admire the light and airy hand with which he treats of the most difficult subjects, and the happy expressions with which he often illustrates the most abstruse ideas. He deals more in Scotch metaphysics than suits the present age ; he made some signal and well-known mistakes in the estimation of contemporary poetry ; and laboured, without effect, to *write up* Ford, Massinger, and the old dramatists, whom their inveterate indecency has justly banished from general popularity. But these faults are amply redeemed by the attractions of his essays in other respects. There are no more charming reviews in our language than some which his collected papers contain ; and no one can rise from their perusal with any surprise that the accomplished author of works containing so much just and kindly criticism should deservedly be a most popular and respected judge.

It is impossible to imagine a more thorough contrast to those of Lord Jeffrey than the writings of SIDNEY SMITH exhibit. Though a reverend and pious divine, the prebendary of St Paul's had very little of the sacerdotal character in his writings. His conversational talents were great, his success in the highest London society unbounded ; but this intoxicating course neither relaxed the vigour of his application, nor deadened the warmth of his feelings. His powers, and they were of no ordinary kind, were always directed, though sometimes with mistaken zeal, to the interests of humanity. His sayings, like those of Talleyrand, were repeated from one end of the empire to the other. These brilliant and sparkling qualities are conspicuous in his writings, and have mainly contributed to their remarkable success both in this country and America. There is scarcely any scholarship, and little information, to be met with in his works. Few take them up to be instructed ; many to be amused. He has little of the equanimity of the judge about him, but a great deal of the wit and jocularity of the pleader. He would have made a first-rate jury counsel, for he would alternately have driven them by the force of his arguments, and amused them by the brilliancy of his expressions. There is no more vigorous and forcible diatribe in our language than his celebrated letter on North American

repudiation, which roused the attention, and excited the admiration, of the repudiators themselves. He has expressed in a single line a great truth, applicable, it is to be feared, to other nations besides the Americans,—"They preferred any load of infamy, however great, to any burden of taxation, however light." But Sidney Smith's blows were expended, and wit lavished, in general, on subjects of passing or ephemeral interest; they were not, like the strokes of Johnson, levelled at the universal frailties and characteristics of human nature. On this account, though their success hitherto has been greater, it is doubtful whether his essays will take so high a lasting place in English literature as those of Lord Jeffrey, which in general treat of works of permanent interest.

Sir James Mackintosh differs as widely from the two original pillars of the *Edinburgh Review* as they do from each other. The publication of his collected essays, with the historical sketch and fragment which he has left, enables us now to form a fair estimate of his powers. That they were great, no one can doubt; but they are of a different kind from what was at first anticipated. It is now apparent that, even if his noble mind had not been in a great degree swallowed up as it was in the bottomless gulf of London society, and if he had spent his whole forenoons for the last fifteen years of his life in writing his history, instead of conversing with fashionable or literary ladies, his labours would have terminated in disappointment. The beginning of the history which he has left is a sufficient proof of this; it is learned, minute, and elaborate, but dull. The Whigs, according to their usual practice with all writers of their own party, hailed its appearance with a flourish of trumpets; but we doubt whether many of them have yet read it through. He had little dramatic power; his writings exhibit no traces of a pictorial eye, and though he had much poetry in his mind, they are not imbued with the poetic character. These deficiencies are fatal to the *popularity* of any historian. No amount of learning or philosophical acuteness can supply their want in the *narrative* of events. Guizot is a proof of this: he is, perhaps, one of the greatest writers on the philosophy of history that ever lived; but his *History of the English Revolution* is lifeless beside the pages of Hume or Gibbon. Sir James Mackintosh

was fitted to have been the Guizot of English history. His mind was essentially didactic. Reflection, not action, was both the bent of his disposition and the theatre of his glory. The characters of the poets and statesmen of England during the eighteenth century, written on the voyage home from Bombay, and published in his very interesting Life by his sons, are perhaps the most perfect criticisms and portraits of the kind in the English language. But he was a great essayist or painter of character, rather than a great historian. His *History of England*, written for Lardner's *Encyclopedia*, can scarcely be called a history ; it is rather a series of discourses on history. It treats so largely of some events, so scantily of others, that a reader not previously acquainted with the subject, might rise from its perusal with scarcely any idea of the thread of English story. But no one who was already informed on it can do so, without feeling his mind stored with original and valuable reflection, just and profound views. His collected essays from the *Edinburgh Review*, lately put together, are not so discursive as those of Lord Jeffrey, nor so amusing as those of Sidney Smith ; but they are much more profound than either, and treat of subjects more permanently interesting to the human race. Many of them, particularly that on representative governments, abound with views equally just and original. It is impossible not to regret that a mind so richly stored with historical knowledge, and so largely endowed with philosophic penetration, should have left so few lasting monuments of its great and varied powers.

Much as these very eminent men differ from each other, Mr MACAULAY is, perhaps, still more clearly distinguished from either. Both his turn of mind and style of writing are peculiar, and exhibit a combination rarely if ever before witnessed in English, or even modern literature. Unlike Lord Jeffrey, he is deeply learned in ancient and modern lore ; his mind is richly stored with the poetry and history both of classical and Continental literature. Unlike Mackintosh, he is eminently dramatic and pictorial ; he alternately speaks poetry to the soul and pictures to the eye. Unlike Sidney Smith, he has avoided subjects of party contention and passing interest, and grappled with the great questions, the immortal names, which will for

ever attract the interest and command the attention of man. Milton, Bacon, Machiavelli, first awakened his discriminating and critical taste; Clive, Warren Hastings, Frederick the Great, called forth his dramatic and historic powers. He has treated of the Reformation and the Catholic reaction in his review of Ranke; of the splendid despotism of the Popedom in that of Hildebrand; of the French Revolution in that of Barère. There is no danger of his essays being forgotten, like many of those of Addison; nor of pompous uniformity of style being complained of, as in most of those of Johnson. His learning is prodigious; and perhaps the chief defects of his composition arise from the exuberant riches of the stores from which they are drawn. When warmed in his subject he is thoroughly in earnest, and his language, in consequence, goes direct to the heart. In many of his writings—and especially the first volume of his history, and his essay on the Reformation—there are reflections equally just and original, which never were surpassed in the philosophy of history. That he is imbued with the soul of poetry need be told to none who have read his Battle of the Lake Regillus; that he is a great biographer will be disputed by none who are acquainted with the splendid biographies of Clive and Hastings, by much the finest productions of the kind in the English language.

Macaulay's style, like other original things, has already produced a school of imitators. Its influence may distinctly be traced, both in the periodical and daily literature of the day. Its great characteristic is the shortness of the sentences, which often equals that of Tacitus himself, and the rapidity with which new and distinct ideas or facts succeed each other in his richly-stored pages. He is the Pope of English prose: he often gives two sentiments or facts in a single line. No preceding writer in prose, in any modern language with which we are acquainted, has carried this art of abbreviation, or rather cramming of ideas, to such a length; and to its felicitous use much of the celebrity which he has acquired is to be ascribed. There is no doubt that it is a most powerful engine for the stirring of the mind, and when not repeated too often, or carried too far, has a surprising effect. Its

introduction forms an era in our historical composition. It reminds us of Sallust and Tacitus. To illustrate our meaning, and at the same time adorn our pages with passages of exquisite, almost redundant beauty, we gladly transcribe two well-known ones, taken from the most perfect of his historical essays. Of Lord Clive he says—

"From Clive's second visit to India dates the political ascendency of the English in that country. His dexterity and resolution realised, in the course of a few months, more than all the gorgeous visions which had floated before the imagination of Dupleix. Such an extent of cultivated territory, such an amount of revenue, such a multitude of subjects, was never added to the dominion of Rome by the most successful proconsul. Nor were such wealthy spoils ever borne under arches of triumph, down the Sacred Way, and through the crowded Forum, to the threshold of Tarpeian Jove. The fame of those who subdued Antiochus and Tigranes grows dim, when compared with the splendour of the exploits which the young English adventurer achieved, at the head of an army not equal in numbers to one-half of a Roman legion. From Clive's third visit to India dates the purity of the administration of our Eastern empire. He first made dauntless and unsparing war on that gigantic system of oppression, extortion, and corruption, which had previously prevailed in India. In that war he manfully put to hazard his ease, his fame, and his splendid fortune. The same sense of justice which forbids us to conceal or extenuate the faults of his earlier days, compels us to admit that those faults were nobly repaired. If the reproach of the Company and its servants has been taken away; if in India the yoke of foreign masters, elsewhere the heaviest of all yokes, has been found lighter than that of any native dynasty; if to that gang of public robbers which formerly spread terror through the whole of Bengal, has succeeded a body of functionaries not more highly distinguished by ability and diligence, than by integrity, disinterestedness, and public spirit; if we now see such men as Munro, Elphinstone, and Metcalfe, after leading victorious armies, after making and deposing kings, return proud of their honourable poverty from a land which once held to every greedy factor the hope of boundless wealth—the praise is in no small degree due to Clive. His name stands high in the roll of conquerors; but it is found in a better list—in the list of those who have done and suffered much in the cause of mankind. To the warrior, history will assign a place in the same rank with Lucullus and Trajan; nor will she deny to the reformer a share of that veneration with which France cherishes the memory of Turgot, and with which the latest generation of Hindoos will contemplate the statue of Lord William Bentinck." *

The well-known description of Hastings' trial is as follows:—

"The place was worthy of such a trial. It was the great hall of William Rufus—the hall which had resounded with acclamations at the inauguration of thirty kings; the hall which had witnessed the just sentence of Bacon, and the just absolution of Somers; the hall where the eloquence of Strafford had for a moment awed and melted a victorious party, inflamed with just resentment; the hall where Charles had confronted the High Court of Justice with the placid courage which has half redeemed his fame. Neither military nor civil pomp was wanting. The avenues were lined with grena-

* *Critical and Miscellaneous Essays*, iii. 205, 206.

diers; the streets were kept clear by cavalry; the peers, robed in gold and ermine, were marshalled by the heralds, under the Garter king-at-arms. The judges, in their vestments of state, attended to give advice on points of law. Near a hundred and seventy lords, three-fourths of the Upper House, as the Upper House then was, walked in solemn order from their usual place of assembling to the tribunal. The junior baron present led the way—George Eliott, Lord Heathfield, recently ennobled by his memorable defence of Gibraltar against the fleets and armies of France and Spain. The long procession was closed by the Duke of Norfolk, earl-marshal of the realm, by the great dignitaries, and by the brothers and sons of the King. Last of all came the Prince of Wales, conspicuous for his fine person and noble bearing. The gray old walls were hung with scarlet. The long galleries were crowded by an audience, such as has rarely excited the fears or the emulation of an orator. There were gathered together, from all parts of a great, free, enlightened, and prosperous empire, grace and female loveliness, wit and learning, the representatives of every science and of every art. There were seated round the Queen the fair-haired young daughters of the house of Brunswick. There the ambassadors of great kings and commonwealths gazed with admiration on a spectacle which no other country in the world could present. There Siddons, in the prime of her majestic beauty, looked with emotion on a scene surpassing all the imitations of the stage. There the historian of the Roman Empire thought of the days when Cicero pleaded the cause of Sicily against Verres, and when, before a senate which still retained some show of freedom, Tacitus thundered against the oppressor of Africa. There were seen, side by side, the greatest painter and the greatest scholar of the age. The spectacle had allured Reynolds from that easel which has preserved to us the thoughtful foreheads of so many writers and statesmen, and the sweet smiles of so many noble matrons. It had induced Parr to suspend his labours in that dark and profound mine from which he had extracted a vast treasure of erudition—a treasure too often buried in the earth, too often paraded with injudicious and inelegant ostentation, but still precious, massive, and splendid. There appeared the voluptuous charms of her to whom the heir of the throne had in secret plighted his faith. There, too, was she, the beautiful mother of a beautiful race, the Saint Cecilia whose delicate features, lighted up by love and music, art has rescued from the common decay. There were the members of that brilliant society which quoted, criticised, and exchanged repartees under the rich peacock hangings of Mrs Montague. And there the ladies, whose lips, more persuasive than those of Fox himself, had carried Westminster against Palace and Treasury, shone round Georgiana Duchess of Devonshire." *

As a contrast to these splendid pictures, we subjoin the picture of the Black Hole of Calcutta, which proves that if the author is, in general, endowed with the richness of Ariosto's imagination, he can, when necessary, exhibit the gloom of Dante's conceptions.

"Then was committed that great crime—memorable for its singular atrocity, memorable for the tremendous retribution by which it was followed. The English captives were left at the mercy of the guards, and the guards determined to secure them for the night in the prison of the garrison—a chamber known by the fearful name of the Black Hole. Even for a single European malefactor, that dungeon would, in such a climate, have

* *Critical and Historical Essays*, iii. 446, 447.

been too close and narrow. The space was only twenty feet square. The air-holes were small and obstructed. It was the summer solstice—the season when the fierce heat of Bengal can scarcely be rendered tolerable to natives of England by lofty halls, and by the constant waving of fans. The number of the prisoners was a hundred and forty-six. When they were ordered to enter the cell, they imagined that the soldiers were joking; and, being in high spirits on account of the promise of the Nabob to spare their lives, they laughed and jested at the absurdity of the notion. They soon discovered their mistake. They expostulated, they entreated, but in vain. The guards threatened to cut all down who hesitated. The captives were driven into the cell at the point of the sword, and the door was instantly shut and locked upon them.

"Nothing in history or fiction—not even the story which Ugolino told in the sea of everlasting ice, after he had wiped his bloody lips on the scalp of his murderer—approaches the horrors which were recounted by the few survivors of that night. They cried for mercy; they strove to burst the door. Holwell, who even in that extremity retained some presence of mind, offered large bribes to the gaolers. But the answer was, that nothing could be done without the Nabob's orders; that the Nabob was asleep, and that he would be angry if anybody woke him. Then the prisoners went mad with despair. They trampled each other down, fought for the places at the windows, fought for the pittance of water with which the cruel mercy of the murderers mocked their agonies—raved, prayed, blasphemed, implored the guards to fire among them. The gaolers, in the mean time, held lights to the bars, and shouted with laughter at the frantic struggles of the victims. At length the tumult died away in low gaspings and moanings. The day broke. The Nabob had slept off his debauch, and permitted the door to be opened; but it was some time before the soldiers could make a lane for the survivors by piling up on each side the heaps of corpses on which the burning climate had already begun to do its loathsome work. When at length a passage was made, twenty-three ghastly figures, such as their own mothers would not have known, came forth alive. A pit was instantly dug: the dead bodies, a hundred and twenty-three in number, were flung into it promiscuously, and covered up."*

This style does admirably well for short biographies, such as those of Warren Hastings or Clive, in the *Edinburgh Review*, in which the object is to condense the important events of a whole lifetime into comparatively few pages, and fascinate the reader by as condensed and brilliant a picture as it is possible to present, of the most striking features of their character and story. But how will it answer for a lengthened history, such as Macaulay's great work promises to be, extending to twelve or fifteen volumes? How will it do to make the "extreme medicine of the constitution its daily bread?" Ragouts and French dishes are admirable at a feast, or on particular occasions, but what should we say to a diet prescribed of such highly seasoned food every day? It is true, there are not many such brilliant and striking passages as those we have quoted. The subject,

* *Critical and Historical Essays*, iii. 144, 146.

of course, would not admit of, the mind of the reader would sink under, the frequent repetition of such powerful emotion. But the style is generally the same. It almost always indicates a crowd of separate ideas, facts, or assertions, in such close juxtaposition that they literally seem wedged together. Such is the extent of the magazine of reading and information from which they are drawn, that they come tumbling out, often without much order or arrangement, and generally so close together that it is difficult for a person not previously acquainted with the subject to tell which are of importance and which are immaterial.

This tendency, when as confirmed and general as it has now become, we consider a most serious fault in Mr Macaulay's style; and it is not less conspicuous in his general history than in his detached biographies. Indeed, its continuance in the former species of composition is mainly owing to the brilliant success with which it has been attended in the latter. In historical essays it is not a blemish, it is a beauty; because, in such miniature portraits or cabinet pieces, minuteness of finishing and crowding of incidents in a small space, are among the principal requisites we desire, the chief charm we admire. But the style of painting which we justly appreciate in Albano and Vanderwerf, would be misplaced in the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, or even the extended canvass of the Transfiguration. We do not object to such elaborate finishing, such brevity of sentences, such crowding of facts and ideas, in the delineation of the striking incidents or principal characters of the work; what we object to is its continuance on ordinary occasions, in the drawing of inconsiderable characters, and in what should be the simple thread of the story. Look how easy Hume is in his ordinary narrative—how unambitious Livy, in the greater part of his history. We desiderate such periods of relaxation and repose in Macaulay. We there always discover learning, genius, power; but the prodigal display of these qualities often mars their effect. We see it not only in delineating the immortal deeds of heroes, or the virtues of princesses, but in portraying the habits of serving-women, or the frailties of maids of honour. With all its elevated and poetical qualities, the mind of Macaulay occasionally gives token of its descent from our common

ancestress, Eve, in an evident fondness for gossip. It would, perhaps, be well for him to remember that the scandal of our great-great-grandmothers is not generally interesting or permanently edifying ; and that he is not to measure the gratification it will give to the world in general, by the avidity with which it is devoured among the titled descendants of the fair sinners in some elevated coteries. There is often a want of breadth and keeping in his pictures. To resume our pictorial metaphor, Macaulay's pages often remind us of the paintings of Bassano, in which warriors and pilgrims, horses, and mules, dromedaries, and camels, sheep and lambs, Arabs and Ethiopians, shining armour and glistening pans, spears and pruning-hooks, scimitars and shepherd's crooks, baskets, tents, and precious stuffs, are crammed together without mercy, and with an equal light thrown on the most insignificant as the most important objects in the piece.

When he is engaged in a subject, however, in which minute painting is not misplaced, and the condensation of striking images is a principal charm, Mr Macaulay's pictorial eye and poetical powers appear in their full lustre. We observe with pleasure that he has not forgotten the example and precept of Herodotus, who considered geography as a principal part of history ; and that, in the description of countries, he has put forth the whole vigour of his mind with equal correctness of drawing and brilliancy of colouring. As a specimen, we subjoin the admirable picture of the plain of Bengal, in the Life of Clive :—

" Of the provinces which had been subject to the house of Tamerlane, the wealthiest was Bengal. No part of India possessed such natural advantages, both for agriculture and for commerce. The Ganges, rushing through a hundred channels to the sea, has formed a vast plain of rich mould, which, even under the tropical sky, rivals the verdure of an English April. The rice-fields yield an increase such as is elsewhere unknown. Spices, sugar, vegetable oils, are produced with marvellous exuberance. The rivers afford an inexhaustible supply of fish. The desolate islands along the sea-coast, overgrown by noxious vegetation, and swarming with deer and tigers, supply the cultivated districts with abundance of salt. The great stream which fertilises the soil is, at the same time, the chief highway of Eastern commerce. On its banks, and on those of its tributary waters, are the wealthiest marts, the most splendid capitals, and the most sacred shrines of India. The tyranny of man had for ages struggled in vain against the overflowing bounty of nature. In spite of the Mussulman despot, and of the Mahratta freebooter, Bengal was known through the East as the Garden of Eden, as the rich kingdom. Its population multiplied exceedingly. Distant provinces were nourished from the overflowing of its granaries ; and the noble ladies of London and Paris were clothed in

the delicate produce of its looms. The race by whom this rich tract was peopled, enervated by a soft climate, and accustomed to peaceful avocations, bore the same relation to other Asiatics which the Asiatics generally bear to the bold and energetic children of Europe. The Castilians have a proverb, that in Valencia the earth is water, and the men women; and the description is at least equally applicable to the vast plain of the lower Ganges. Whatever the Bengalee does he does languidly. His favourite pursuits are sedentary. He shrinks from bold exertion; and, though voluble in dispute, and singularly pertinacious in the war of chicane, he seldom engages in a personal conflict, and scarcely ever enlists as a soldier. We doubt whether there be a hundred Bengalees in the whole army of the East India Company. There never, perhaps, existed a people so thoroughly fitted by nature and by habit for a foreign yoke." *

The talent of military description, and the picture of battles, is one of a very peculiar kind, which is often wholly awanting in historians of a very high character in other respects. It is a common observation, that all battles in history are like each other—a sure proof that their authors did not understand the subject; for every battle, fought from the beginning of time, in reality differs from another as much as every countenance. In his previous writings, Mr Macaulay had enjoyed few opportunities of exhibiting his strength in this important particular; though it might have been anticipated, from the brilliancy of his imagination, and the powerful pictures in his *Lays of Rome*, that he would not be inferior in this respect to what he had proved himself to be in other parts of history. But the matter has now been put to the test; and it gives us the highest satisfaction to perceive, from the manner in which he has treated a comparatively trifling engagement, that he is fully qualified to portray the splendid victories of Marlborough, the bold intrepidity of Hawke, and the gallant daring of Peterborough. It would be difficult to find in history a more spirited and graphic description than he has given in his great work of the battle of Sedgemoor, with the scene of which he seems, from early acquaintance, to be peculiarly familiar :—

" Monmouth was startled at finding that a broad and profound trench lay between him and the camp he had hoped to surprise. The insurgents halted on the edge of the hollow, and fired. Part of the royal infantry, on the opposite bank, returned the fire. During three quarters of an hour the roar of musketry was incessant. The Somersetshire peasants behaved as if they had been veteran soldiers, save only that they levelled their pieces too high. But now the other divisions of the royal army were in motion. The Life Guards, and Blues, came pricking up from Weston

* *Critical and Historical Essays*, iii. 141, 142.

Zoyland, and scattered, in an instant, some of Grey's horse, who had attempted to rally. The fugitives spread a panic among their comrades in the rear, who had charge of the ammunition. The waggoners drove off at full speed, and never stopped till they were some miles from the field of battle. Monmouth had hitherto done his part like a stout and able warrior. He had been seen on foot, pike in hand, encouraging his infantry by voice and example. But he was too well acquainted with military affairs not to know that all was over. His men had lost the advantage which surprise and darkness had given them. They were deserted by the horse and by the ammunition waggons. The king's forces were now united, and in good order. Feversham had been awakened by the firing, had adjusted his cravat, had looked himself well in the glass, and had come to see what his men were doing. What was of much more consequence, Churchill (Marlborough) had rapidly made an entirely new disposition of the royal infantry. The day had begun to break. The event of a conflict on an open plain by broad sunlight could not be doubtful. Yet Monmouth should have felt that it was not for him to fly, while thousands, whom affection for him had hurried to destruction, were still fighting manfully in his cause. But vain hopes, and the intense love of life, prevailed. He saw that, if he tarried, the royal cavalry would soon be in his rear: he mounted, and rode off from the field.

Yet his foot, though deserted, made a gallant stand. The Life Guards attacked them on the right, the Blues on the left; but these Somerset clowns, with their scythes and the butt-ends of their muskets, faced the royal horse like old soldiers. Oglethorpe made a vigorous attempt to break them, and was manfully repulsed. Sarsfield, a brave Irish officer, whose name afterwards obtained a melancholy celebrity, charged on the other flank. His men were beaten back: he himself was struck to the ground, and lay, for a time, as one dead. But the struggle of the hardy rustics could not last; their powder and ball were spent. Cries were heard of, "Ammunition! for God's sake, ammunition!" But no ammunition was at hand. And now the king's artillery came up. Even when the guns had arrived, there was such a want of gunners, that a sergeant of Dumbarton's regiment had to take upon himself the management of several pieces. The cannon, however, though ill served, brought the engagement to a speedy close. The pikes of the rebel battalions began to shake—the ranks broke. The king's cavalry charged again, and bore down everything before them. The king's infantry came pouring across the ditch. Even in that extremity, the Mendip miners stood bravely to their arms, and sold their lives dearly. But the rout was in a few minutes complete; three hundred of the soldiers had been killed or wounded. Of the rebels, more than a thousand lay dead on the moor."*

We have dwelt so long on the general characteristics and peculiar excellences of Mr Macaulay's compositions, that we have hardly left ourselves sufficient space to enter so fully as we could wish into the merits of the great work on which he has staked his reputation with future times. It was looked forward to with peculiar, and we may say unexampled interest, both from the known celebrity and talents of the author—not less as a parliamentary orator than a practised critic—and the importance of the blank which he was expected to fill up in English literature. He

* *History*, i. 610, 611.

has contracted an engagement with the public, to give the *History of England* during the last century; to fill up the void from the English to the French Revolution. He came after Hume, whose simple and undying narrative will be coeval with the long and eventful thread of English story. He has undertaken the history of the glorious age of Queen Anne, and the era of the first Georges—of the victories of Marlborough, and the disasters of Burgoyne—of the energy of Chatham, and the brilliancy of Bolingbroke; he has to recount equally the chivalrous episode of Charles Edward and the heroic death of Wolfe—the inglorious capitulation of Cornwallis, and the matchless triumphs of Clive. That the two first volumes of his work have not disappointed the public expectation, is proved by the fact that, before two months had elapsed from publication, they had already reached a third edition.

We shall not, in treating of the merits of this very remarkable production, adopt the not uncommon practice of reviewers on such occasions. We shall not pretend to be better informed on the details of the subject than the author. We shall not set up the reading of a few weeks or months against the study of half a lifetime. We shall not imitate certain critics who look at the bottom of the pages for the authorities of the author, and, having got the clue to the requisite information, proceed to examine with the utmost minuteness every particular of his narrative, and make in consequence a vast display of knowledge wholly derived from the reading which he has suggested. We shall not be so deluded as to suppose we have made a great discovery in biography, because we have ascertained that some Lady Caroline of the last generation was born on the 7th October 1674, instead of the 8th February 1675, as the historian, with shameful negligence, has affirmed; nor shall we take credit to ourselves for a journey down to Hampshire to consult the parish register on the subject. As little shall we in future accuse Macaulay of inaccuracy in describing battles, because on referring, without mentioning it, to the military authorities he has quoted, and the page he has referred to, we have discovered that at some battle, as Malplaquet, Lottum's men stood on the right of the Prince of Orange, when he says they stood on

the left; or that Marlborough dined on a certain day at one o'clock, when in point of fact he did not sit down, as is proved by incontestable authority, till half-past two. We shall leave such minute and Lilliputian criticisms to the minute and Lilliputian minds by whom alone they are ever made. Mr Macaulay can afford to smile at all reviewers who affect to possess more than his own gigantic stores of information.

In the first place, we must bestow the highest praise on the general sketch of English history which he has given down to the period of Charles. Such a *precis* forms the most appropriate introduction to his work, and it is done with a penetration and justice which leaves nothing to be desired. Several of his remarks are equally original and profound, and applicable—not only to a right understanding of the thread of former events, but to the social questions with which the nation is engaged at the present moment. We allude in particular to the observations that the spread of the Reformation has been everywhere commensurate with that of the Teutonic race, and that it has never been able to take root among those of Celtic descent; that, in modern times, the spread of intelligence and the vigour of the human mind have been co-extensive with the establishment of the Reformed opinions, while despotism in governments and slumber in their subjects have characterised, with certain brilliant exceptions of infidel passion, those in which the ancient faith is still prevalent; and that the Romish belief and observances were the greatest blessing to humanity during the violence and barbarism of the Middle Ages, but have proved the reverse among enlightened nations of modern times. It is refreshing to see opinions of this obviously just and important kind advanced, and distinctions drawn, by a writer of the high celebrity and vast knowledge of Mr Macaulay. It is still more important when we have only just emerged from an age in which the admission of the Roman Catholics into Parliament was so strenuously recommended, as the greatest boon which could possibly be conferred on society—and are entering on another, in which its ceremonies and excitements have become the refuge of so many even in this country, at least of the softer sex, and in the highest ranks,

with whom the usual attractions of the world have begun to fail or become insipid—to see the evident tendency of the Romish faith characterised in a manner equally removed from the bigoted prejudices of the Puritans, and the blind passion of modern Catholic proselytism, by an author bred up amid the din of Roman Catholic Emancipation, and himself a distinguished contributor to the *Edinburgh Review*.

We wish we could bestow equal praise on the justice of the views, and impartiality of the delineation of character, in the critical period of the Great Rebellion, which Mr Macaulay treats more at length; and lest he should fear that our praise will be valueless, as being that of a panegyric, we shall be proud to give him fierce battle on that point. We thank God we are not only old Tories, but, as the Americans said of ourselves, the "*oldest of Tories;*" and we are weak enough to be confirmed in our opinions by the evident fact that they are those of a minority of the present age. It is not likely, therefore, that we should not find an opportunity to break a lance with our author in regard to Charles I. and the Great Rebellion. We must admit, however, that Mr Macaulay is now much more impartial in his estimate of that event, than he was in some of his previous essays; that he gives with anxious fairness the arguments on the opposite side of the question; and that he no longer represents the royal victim as now a favourite only with women—and that because his countenance is pacific and handsome on the canvass of Vandyke, and he took his son often on his knee, and kissed him.

Mr Macaulay represents the Great Rebellion as a glorious and salutary struggle for the liberties of England; a struggle to the success of which, against the tyranny of the Stuarts, the subsequent greatness of England is mainly to be ascribed. The trial and execution of Charles I. he describes as an event melancholy, and to be deplored; but unavoidable and necessary, in consequence of the perfidy and deceit of a "man whose whole life had been a series of attacks on the liberties of England." He does full justice to the courage and dignity with which he met his fate, but holds that he was deservedly destroyed, though in a most violent and illegal manner,* in consequence of his

* Vol. i. 127, 128.

perfidy and machinations. "There never," says he, "was a politician to whom so many frauds and falsehoods were brought home by undeniable evidence."—We take a directly opposite view of the question. We consider the resistance of the Long Parliament to Charles as a series of selfish and unprincipled acts of treason against a lawful sovereign; not less fatal to the liberties of the country at the time, than they were calculated in the end to have proved to its independence, and which would long ere this have effected its ruin, if another event had not, in a way which its authors did not intend, worked out a cure for the disease. We consider the civil war *to have been* a contest commenced from blind selfishness, "ignorant impatience of taxation," and consummated under the combined influence of hypocritical zeal and guilty ambition. We regard the death of Charles as an atrocious and abominable murder, vindicated by no reasons of expedience, authorised by no principle of justice, which has lowered for ever England to the level of the adjoining nations in the scale of crime; and which, had it not been vindicated by subsequent loyalty and chivalrous feeling in the better part of the people, would long since have extinguished alike its liberties and its independence. Even Hume has represented the conduct and motives of the leaders of the Long Parliament in too favourable a light. And it is no wonder he did so, for it is only since his time that the selfish passions have been brought into play on the political theatre—which at once explain the difficulties with which Charles had to struggle, and put in a just light his tragic fate.

Mr Hume represents the Long Parliament, in the commencement of the contest with the king, as influenced by a generous desire to secure and extend the liberties of their country, and as making use of the constitutional privilege of giving or withholding supplies for that important object. If this was really their object, we should at once admit they acted the part of true patriots, and are entitled to the lasting gratitude of their country and the world. But, admitting this was what they professed, that this was their stalking-horse, in what respect did their conduct correspond with such patriotic declarations? Did they use either their legitimate or usurped power for the purpose of extending

and confirming the liberties of their country, or even diminishing the weight of the public burdens which pressed most severely on the people? So far from doing so, they multiplied these burdens fiftyfold; they levied them, not by the authority of Parliament, but by the terrors of military execution; and while they refused to the entreaties of the king the pittance of a few hundred thousand pounds, to put the coasts in a state of defence, and protect the commerce of his subjects, or carry on the war in defence of the Protestant faith and his own brother-in-law, in which they themselves had involved him in the Palatinate, they levied of their own authority, and without parliamentary sanction, no less than *eighty-four millions* sterling, between 1640 and 1659, in the form of military contributions—levied for no other purpose but to deluge the kingdom with blood, destroy its industry, and subject its liberties to the ruin of military oppression. They succeeded in the strife: they gained all for which they contended; and when victorious they proved such a curse to the country that they were dismissed with ignominy, with its universal concurrence, by their own soldiers.

True, Charles I. dissolved many Parliaments, was often hasty and intemperate in the mode of doing so; for eleven years reigned without a House of Commons, and brought on the collision by his attempt to levy ship-money, for the protection of the coasts, of his own authority. But why did he do so? Why did he endeavour to dispense with the old and venerable name of Parliament, and incur the odium, and run the risk, of governing alone in a country where the hereditary revenue was so scanty, and the passion for freedom so strong that, even with all the aids from Parliament, he had never enjoyed so large an income as one million a-year? Simply because he was driven to it by necessity; because he found it was absolutely impossible to get on with Parliaments which obstinately refused to discharge their first of duties—that of providing for the public defence—or discharge his obligations as chief magistrate of the realm, in conformity either with his coronation oath or the plain necessities of his office, from the invincible resistance which the House of Commons, on every occasion, made to parting with money.

Their conduct was regulated by a very plain principle—it was perfectly consistent, and such as, under the existing constitution, could not fail very soon to bring Government to a dead-lock, and compel the sovereign either at once to abdicate his authority, or barter it away piecemeal against small grants of money, reluctantly, and in the most parsimonious spirit, granted by his subjects. They said, "Govern any way you please, defend the country the best way you can, get out of your difficulties as you think fit, *but do not come to us for money.* Anything but that. It is your business to defend us, it is not ours to contribute to our defence. Let our coasts be insulted by the French, or pillaged by the Dutch; let our trade be ruined, and even our fishermen chased into their harbours, by the Continental privateers; let the Protestant faith be ruined in Germany, and your own brother-in-law driven from his throne, but don't come to us for money. If we give you anything, it will be as little as we can in decency offer; and, in return for such liberal concessions, you must on every occasion surrender an important part of the prerogative of the crown." The king did this for some years after he came to the throne, always trusting that his concessions would secure at length a liberal supply of money, for the public defence, from the House of Commons. He said, and said with truth, that he had conceded more to his subjects than any monarch that ever sat on the throne of England. The Petition of Rights, granted early in his reign, proved this: it contained nearly all the guarantees since desired or obtained for English freedom. But all was unavailing. The Commons would give no money, or they would give it only in exchange for the most essential prerogatives of the crown, without which public defence was impossible, and anarchy must have usurped its place.

They began the civil war at length, and handed the nation over to the horrors of domestic slaughter and military despotism, because the king would not consent to part with the command of the armed force—a requisition so monstrous that it plainly amounted to an abrogation of the royal authority, and has never, since the Restoration, been seriously contended for by Radicals, Repealers, or Chartists, even in the worst periods of the Irish Rebellion or French

Revolution. It is not surprising that subsequent times for long mistook the real nature of the king's situation, and threw on him blame for events of which, in reality, he was blameless. Mankind were not then so well acquainted as they have since become with the strength of an ignorant impatience of taxation. Since then they have seen it divide the greatest empires, ruin the most celebrated commonwealths, disgrace the most famed republics, paralyse the most powerful states. It has broken down the central authority, and divided into separate kingdoms the once puissant German empire; it has ruined and brought partition on the gallant Polish democracy; it induced on France the horrors of the Revolution, and permanently destroyed its liberties by causing the Notables to refuse Calonne's proposition for equal taxation; it has disgraced the rise of American freedom, by the selfishness of repudiation and the cupidity of conquest. These were the evils, and this the disgrace, which Charles I. strove to avert in his contest with the Long Parliament; these the evils, and this the disgrace, which their leaders strove to impose on this country. We have only to look at the Free-trade Hall at Manchester, at this time re-echoing with applause at proposals to disband our army and sell our ships, in order to be able to sell cotton goods a halfpenny per pound cheaper than at present, to see what was the spirit with which Charles I. had to contend during the Great Rebellion.

Historians have often expressed their surprise at the vigour of the rule of Cromwell, and the energetic manner in which he caused the national flag to be respected by foreign states. But, without detracting from the well-earned fame of the Protector in this respect, it may safely be affirmed, that the main cause of his success in foreign transactions was, that he had got the means of making the English pay taxes. He levied them with the sabre and the bayonet. He had a standing army of forty thousand men for his tax-gatherers. Between contributions, sequestrations, and impositions, his commissioners contrived to wrench enormous sums, for those days, out of the country. He raised the revenue from less than £1,000,000 a-year to nearly £6,000,000. He got quit of the disagreeable burden of parliamentary grants. He found his troops much more

effectual tax-gatherers. He did what, by gentler means, and in a less oppressive way, Charles had tried to do. He levied sums from the nation adequate for the public defence, and which enabled it to take the place to which it was entitled in the scale of nations. Had the original leaders of the Long Parliament not been superseded by his iron hand, they would have left England as much exposed to foreign insult, as much in peril of foreign invasion, as Poland found itself from the triumph of the same selfish principles.

Decisive evidence that it was this insurmountable objection to taxation, even for the most just and necessary purposes, and the firm determination to let Government and the whole national defences go to ruin rather than vote the requisite supplies in Parliament, which induced the civil war, and brought Charles to the block, is to be found in what occurred under the Protectorate of Cromwell. Although the nation had had ample experience under the iron rule of that celebrated man, and the enormous expenditure of the Long Parliament, of what it was to have contributions levied by military force; although four Parliaments which he had summoned had been abruptly dissolved because they refused to grant supplies in a legal manner, and although the enormous sum of £1,016,317 a-year was divided among a house not exceeding three hundred members, a sum four times larger than ever was enjoyed in a year by Charles I., in order to render them more tractable;* and although repeated purges, after the example of Pride, had been applied to the House to get quit of its refractory members, yet such was the invincible reluctance of the English House of Commons to voting supplies, even to the Republican Government of their own choice, that the Protector was reduced to as great straits for want of money in the close of his career as ever Charles had been; and nothing but his opportune death in 1658 saved the nation from a civil war, originating in the same necessity as that which had brought that ill-fated monarch to the scaffold.†

* In a catalogue printed at the time, the names of 182 members of Parliament in 1657 were given. "Sons, kinsmen, servants, and otherwise engaged to, and had places of profit under the Protector, sharing annually among them out of the public money £1,016,317, 16s. 8d. annually."—See LINGARD, viii. 512, 5th edition; and *Parl. Hist.* iii. 1502, 1511.

† LINGARD, viii. 512. 5th edition.

It is true Charles at length became a dissembler, and made many promises which were afterwards broken. But why did he become a dissembler? How did it happen that his nature, originally open, unreserved, and chivalrous, even to a fault, became at length cautious, and marked by dissimulation? Simply because he was assailed on all sides by dissemblers and dissimulators. He was driven to it by stern necessity in his own defence, and as the only way of carrying on the government. The whole conduct of his parliaments to him was one tissue of falsehood and deceit. They constantly professed loyalty with their lips, while they were thinking only of treason in their hearts; they were loud in their protestations of zeal for the public service, when they were thinking only of keeping close their purse-strings, and shaking off every imaginable tax levied for the public defence. Like their descendants in Transatlantic realms, they "preferred any load of infamy, however great, to any burden of taxation, however light." It was only by fair words, by promising more than he was able to perform, by bartering the prerogative of the crown for parsimonious grants—£200,000 one year, £300,000 another—that he was able to provide, in the most penurious way, for the public service. His faithful Commons were impressed with the idea, and proceeded on the principle, that the monarch was an enemy cased in armour, and that it was their business to strip him of every article he possessed, so as to leave him entirely at their mercy, and reduce the government to a pure untaxed democracy. They first got the shield; they next seized the helmet; the breastplate could not long be withheld; and at last they began to fight for the sword. Was consistency, or perfect sincerity of conduct, practicable with such men? Have not the English in their wars in the East, been under the necessity of borrowing from their opponents much of their vigour and violence, and not unfrequently their ambition and dissimulation? Let us figure to ourselves Queen Victoria, without a national debt or parliamentary influence, going to Mr Cobden and the Commons in Free-Trade Hall, Manchester, and asking for funds to support the army and navy in a defensive war, which promised no extension of the market for cotton goods; or the President of the American Republic

proposing a direct income-tax of five per cent on his faithful repudiators, to support a war which held out a prospect neither of Mexican silver nor Californian gold—and we shall have some idea of the difficulties with which the unhappy Charles had to contend in his parliamentary struggles, and appreciate the stern necessity which turned even his noble and chivalrous character to temporary shifts, and sometimes discreditable expedients.

Again, as to the death of Charles, can it be regarded in any other light but as a foul and atrocious murder? He was tried neither by the Peers nor the Commons—neither by the courts of law nor a national convention—but by a self-constituted junto of military officers, rebels to his government, traitors to their country, who, having exhausted, in their remorseless career, every imaginable crime of robbery, rape, arson, assault, and treason, now added WILFUL MURDER —cold-blooded murder, to the number. However it is viewed, the crime was equally unpardonable and inexpedient. If the country was still to be regarded as a monarchy, though torn by intestine divisions, then were Cromwell and all his brother regicides not only murderers, but traitors, for they put to death their lawful sovereign. If the bonds of allegiance are to be held as having been broken in the preceding convulsions, and the contest considered as that of one state with another—which is the most favourable view to adopt for the regicides—then Charles, when he fell into their hands, was a prisoner of war; and it was as much murder to put him to death, as it would have been in the English if they had slain Napoleon when he came on board the Bellerophon, or in Charles V. if he had despatched Francis I. when he became his prisoner after the battle of Pavia. The immediate object at issue when the civil war began—the right claimed by the Commons of appointing officers to the militia—was one in which they were clearly and confessedly in the wrong, and one which, if granted by Charles, as all the previous demands of the Commons had been, would infallibly have landed the nation in the bottomless pit of an untaxed, unbridled, and senseless democracy, as incapable of self-defence as Poland, as regardless of external rights as Rome in ancient, or America in modern times.

The extreme peril to English liberties and independence which arose from the exorbitant pretensions and disastrous success of the Long Parliament, with their canting military successors, distinctly appears in the deplorable state and disgraceful situation of England from the Restoration in 1661 to the Revolution in 1688. Notwithstanding all their professions of regard for freedom, and their anxiety to secure the liberties of the subject, the Long Parliament had done nothing for either in future times, while they had destroyed both in present. They had not even introduced a *habeas corpus* act to guard against arbitrary imprisonment. They had not given life appointments to the judges. They had made no provision for the impartial selection of juries. They had left the courts of law what, till the Revolution, they had ever been in English history—the arena in which the contending factions in the state alternately overthrew or murdered each other. They were too decided tyrants in their hearts to part with any of the weapons of tyranny in their hands. They had established a tyranny so grinding, supported by a standing army of 40,000 men, that all ranks sighed in secret for the comparative mildness of Charles's government. They had made no permanent provision for the support of the crown, or the maintenance of a force by sea and land adequate to the public defence; but left their sovereign at the mercy of a parliament of cavaliers eager for vengeance, thirsting for blood, but nearly as indisposed to make any suitable grants for the public service as any of their predecessors had been. So obvious, however, was the truth that the Great Rebellion had been entirely owing to the want of any fixed revenue for the Crown to uphold the Government, that the first thing the Parliament did, on the Restoration, was to settle an income of £1,200,000 on the Crown.* Though this grant appeared a prodigious sum in those days, and was five times more than Charles had ever enjoyed, independent of parliamentary grants, it was yet wholly inadequate to upholding the national armaments, and discharging the great arrears left unpaid to the army by the Republican Government; and the subsequent alliance with France, and receipt of pensions from its Government, were chiefly owing to the experienced

* LINGARD, ix. 6.

impossibility of getting even the Royalist Commons to vote adequate sums to Government. The "ignorant impatience of taxation" was as conspicuous in the parsimony of their supplies as it had been in those of Charles's parliament. But such was the strength of the reaction in favour of Monarchy and Royal authority, in consequence of the intensity of the evils which had been suffered from Democratic and Parliamentary government, that there was scarcely any sacrifice of public liberties that the Royalist parliaments were not at first disposed to have made, provided it could be done without trenching on their pecuniary resources. An *untaxed despotism* was their idea of the perfection of government, as an untaxed republic had been the lure held out by the Parliamentary leaders, though a most heavily taxed republic was their practice when they got into power. Had Charles II. been a man of as much vigour and perseverance as he was of quickness and talent, and had his abilities, which were wasted in the boudoirs of the Duchess of Portsmouth or the Countess of Castlemaine, been devoted, like those of Louis XI. or Cardinal Richelieu, to a systematic attack on the public liberties, he might, without difficulty, have subverted the freedom of England, and left, as a legacy of the Long Parliament, to future times, not only the murder of their sovereign, but the final ruin of the national liberties.

Mr Macaulay has done one essential service to the cause of truth by the powerful and graphic, and, we doubt not, correct account he has given, in his first volume, of the desperate feuds of the rival parties with each other during this reign, and the universal prostitution of the forms of justice, and the sanctity of courts of law, to the most cruel and abominable purposes. There is no picture of human iniquity and cruelty more revolting than is presented in the alternate triumphs of the Whig and Tory parties, from the excitement produced by the Popish and Ryehouse plots, and the noble blood which was shed alternately by both parties in torrents on the scaffold, to allay the terrors of insensate folly, or satiate the revenge of aroused indignation. The hideous iniquity of the courts of law during those disastrous days, and the entire concurrence of the ruling majority of the moment in their atrocious proceedings, demonstrate how

lamentably the Long Parliament had failed in erecting any bulwarks for the public liberties, or strengthening the foundations of public virtue ; and how fallacious is the idea, that any, even the smallest, protection to individual freedom is to be derived from democratic triumph. At the same time, the disgraceful spectacle of our fleets swept from the Channel, or burnt in their harbours by the Dutch, proves how wretched a provision the Great Rebellion had made for the lasting defence of the realm. Nor was private morality, either in high or low places, on a better footing. The King and all his ministers received the pensions of Louis XIV. ; the whole leaders of the patriots, from Algernon Sidney downwards, with the exception of Lord Russell, followed his example. The ladies of the metropolis, as well as the court, were intent only on intrigue. The licentiousness of the stage was such as almost exceeds belief. Nothing was thought of in the House of Commons but saving money or satisfying revenge ; nothing in the court but getting money, or gratifying passion. Such was the parsimony of parliament, whether the majority was Whig or Royalist, that the most necessary expenses of the royal household could only be defrayed by pensions from France. French mistresses directed the King's councils, and almost exclusively occupied his time ; French alliance misdirected the national forces ; French manners entirely subverted the national morals. England, from its vacillation in foreign policy, had forfeited all the respect of foreign nations, while, from the general selfishness and corruption which prevailed, it had lost all respect for itself. The Long Parliament and Great Rebellion, from the necessary reaction, to which they gave rise, of loyalty against treason, and of the thirst for pleasure against the cant of hypocrisy, had all but ruined England ; for they had exchanged its liberties for tyranny, its morals for licentiousness.

In truth, England *was ruined*, both externally and internally, from these causes, had it not been for one of those events by which Providence at times confounds the counsels of men, and changes the destiny of nations. The accession of James II., and the systematic attack which, in concert with Louis XIV., he made on the Protestant faith, at length united all England against the fatal attempt. The

spectacle of the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, in France, in November 1685, showed the Protestants what they had to expect from the measures simultaneously adopted, and in virtue of a secret compact, by James II. in England. The Treaty of Augsburg in 1686, by which the Protestant states of the Continent were united in a league against this Roman Catholic invasion, and to which William III., on the Revolution, immediately got England to accede, was the foundation of the Grand Alliance which secured independence to the Reformed faith, and liberty to Europe, as effectually as the Grand Alliance in 1813 rescued it from the tyranny of Napoleon. We go along entirely with Mr Macaulay's admirable account of the causes which led to the general coalition of parties against James—the abominable cruelty of Jeffreys' campaign in the west, after the suppression of Monmouth's rebellion, and the evident determination the monarch evinced to force the slavery and absurdities of the Romish faith on a nation too generally enlightened to submit to either. It is refreshing to see these just and manly sentiments, so long the glory of England, coming from a man of his weight and learning, after the sickly partiality for Roman Catholic agitators which, for the purposes of faction, have so long pervaded many of his party, and the inexplicable return to the sway of priests and confessors which has recently appeared among some of our women of fashion. We hold that James justly forfeited his crown for his share in these atrocious proceedings, and entirely concur with Mr Macaulay in regarding the Revolution as the turning-point of English history—the *terminus a quo*, from which we are to date its celebrity in arms and literature, its mighty advance in strength and power, and the establishment of its liberties on a lasting foundation. We congratulate the country that the task of recording the circumstances, and tracing the consequences, of this great event, has fallen into the hands of a gentleman so singularly qualified to do it justice, and sincerely wish him a long lease of life and health to bring his noble work to a conclusion.

If we were disposed to criticise at all the manner in which he has executed the part of this great work hitherto presented to the public, we should say that, in the tracing

the causes of events, he ascribes too much to domestic, and too little to foreign influences; and that in the delineation of character, though he never advances what is false, he not unfrequently conceals, or touches but lightly, on what is true. He represents England as almost entirely regulated in its movements by internal agitation or Parliamentary contests; forgetting that that agitation and these contests were in general themselves, in great part, produced by the simultaneous changes going on in opinion and external relations on the Continent. His history, as yet at least, is too exclusively English, not sufficiently European. Thus he mentions only incidentally, and in three lines, the treaty of Augsburg in 1686, which bound Protestant Europe against France, and entirely regulated the external policy and internal thought of England for the next century. So also in the delineation of character: we can never fail to admire what he has done, but we have sometimes too much cause to regret what he has left undone. He has told us, what is undoubtedly true, that James II. did not, after the struggle began in England, evince the courage he had previously shown in action with the Dutch; but he has not told us what is equally true, that in those actions he had fought as often, and evinced heroism as great, as either Nelson or Collingwood. Would any one suppose, from this cursory mention of the Duke of York's gallantry and martial qualities, *which is all he says of them in his work*, that he was the prince who had repeatedly defeated the Dutch in many dreadful battles, at the head of fleets three times as numerous as ever were led by St Vincent or Nelson; that he introduced a system of naval tactics which was invariably followed, till that of breaking the line was first put in practice by Rodney on the 12th April 1781, and for whose glorious victories even the parsimonious Parliament of those days voted a grant of £120,000! Of his first great battle, when he led *ninety-eight* sail of the line, and the Dutch had *one hundred and thirteen* ships of war, the following account is given by an acute historian, who, though he often suppresses or glosses over what is unfavourable to the cause he wishes to promote, never advances a fact not supported by sufficient authority.

"Early in the morning of the 3d of June, the hostile fleets descried each

other near Lowestoffe. Seven hours were spent in attempts on each side to gain and keep the advantage of the wind; at length the English, by a skilful manœuvre, tacked in the same direction with the enemy, and accompanied them in a parallel line, till the signal was made for each ship to bear down and engage its opponent. The sea was calm: not a cloud could be seen in the sky; and a gentle breeze blew from the south-west. The two nations fought with their characteristic obstinacy, and during four hours the issue hung in suspense. On one occasion the Duke was in the most imminent peril. All the ships of the red squadron, with the exception of two, had dropped out of the line to refit; and the weight of the enemy's fire was directed against his flag-ship, the Royal Charles. The Earl of Falmouth, the Lord Muskerry, and Boyle, son to the Earl of Burlington, who stood by his side, were slain by the same shot; and James himself was covered with the blood of his slaughtered friends. Gradually, however, the disabled ships resumed their stations; the English obtained the superiority; and the fire of the enemy was observed to slacken. A short pause allowed the smoke to clear away; and the confusion, which the Duke observed on board his opponent, the Eendracht, bearing Opdam's flag, induced him to order all his guns to be discharged into her in succession, and with deliberate aim. At the third shot from the lower tier she blew up, and the admiral, with five hundred men, perished in the explosion. Alarmed at the loss of their commander, the Dutch fled. James led the chase; the four sternmost sail of the enemy ran foul of each other, and were consumed by a fireship, and three others shortly afterwards experienced the same fate. But Van Tromp kept the fugitives together, whilst the darkness of the night retarded the pursuit of the conquerors; and in the morning the Dutch fleet was moored in safety within the shallows. In this action, the most glorious hitherto fought by the navy of England, the enemy lost four admirals, seven thousand men slain or made prisoners, and eighteen sail either burnt or taken. The loss of the victors was small in proportion." — LINGARD, vol. ix. p. 105-6-7.

Of another battle, in which the Duke of York was opposed to De Ruyter, and there were *forty* English sail of the line against *seventy* of their worthy antagonists the Dutch, that fought off Ostend on 28th May 1672, the same author gives the following account :—

"Seldom has any battle in our naval annals been more stubbornly contested. The English had to struggle with a bold and experienced enemy, and against the most fearful disparity of force. Their ships were so intermingled among the multitude of their opponents that they could afford little support to each other; still they fought with the most desperate courage, hoping to protract the action till they could be joined by the remainder of the fleet in the bay. About eleven o'clock the Duke's ship, the Prince, of 100 guns, had lost above a third of her men, and lay a motionless wreck on the water. Having ordered her to be towed out of danger, he passed through the window of his cabin into his shallop, rowed through the enemy's fire, and unfurled the royal standard in the St Michael of 90 guns. During the afternoon, the other ships joined the fleet, and the combatants began to fight on a footing of equality. About five, it was reported to the Duke of York that the St Michael could with difficulty be kept afloat, on account of the injury she had received in her hull; and, trusting again to his shallop, he transported his flag to the London. De Ruyter was the first to shrink from the conflict. Thus terminated this bloody and obstinate engagement. The English lost one, their opponents three ships of the line. It was said

by a contemporary eyewitness—'The Duke of York himself had the noblest share in this day's action; for when his ship was so maimed as to be made incapable of service, he made her lie by to refit, and went on board another that was hotly engaged, where he kept up his standard till she was disabled, and then left her for a third, in order to renew the fight, which lasted from break of day till sunset.'"—*Works of Duke of Buckingham, who was present*, vol. ii. p. 15.—LINGARD, vol. ix. p. 212, 213.

And it is of a prince who had done SUCH THINGS that Macaulay merely says, he did not exhibit the spirit, when he fell from the throne, which he had done in his earlier years when combating the Dutch! He might as well have dismissed Nelson in a single line, by saying he was a vain, foolish man ashore, but he certainly exhibited some spirit in early life at sea in combating the French. It is in vain to say Mr Macaulay's *History* begins in detail with the accession of James in 1685: he is sufficiently minute in his account of previous transactions when he pleases: witness his elaborate account of the Puritans, and Ryehouse and Popish plots. Would it not have been more just, not to say generous, in regard to a gallant political opponent, who afterwards justly fell from his throne for his offences, to have given in detail and with fair eulogy what he really did that was noble? Shakspeare has told us how to deal with such characters, and the historian will best attain his end who follows his counsel:—"As Cæsar loved me, I weep for him; as he was fortunate, I rejoice at it; as he was valiant, I honour him; but as he was ambitious, I slew him. There is tears for his love, joy for his fortune, honour for his valour, and *death for his ambition*." *

Mr Macaulay has told us that James sedulously attended to the royal navy, and was successful because he was the only honest man in his dockyards; but he has not told us what is equally true, that it was that attention to the navy, and the effort to raise funds for it, which the Long Parliament from selfish parsimony positively refused to grant, which cost Charles I. his throne and life, and, now renewed by his son, laid the foundation of the navy which gained the battle of La Hogue in 1692, broke the naval power of Louis XIV., and for the next century determined the maritime struggle between France and England.

He has told us sufficiently often, that the beginning of

* *Julius Cæsar.*

the Duke of Marlborough's fortunes was the gift of £5000, which he received from the beautiful mistress of the king, Lady Castlemaine. This is undoubtedly true; and he has added what we have no doubt is equally so, that on one occasion he was so near being caught with her ladyship that he only escaped by leaping out of the window. He has stated, also, that whenever he was going to do anything particularly base, Marlborough always began speaking about his conscience and the Protestant faith. We have no objection to the leaping the window, for it is very probable, and at all events *piquant*—and *se non e vero e bene trovato;* but we object vehemently to his protestations in favour of the Reformed religion being set down as a hypocritical cover for base and selfish designs, for that is imputing motives—a mode of proceeding never allowed in the humblest court of justice, and in an especial manner reprehensible in a first-rate historian, who is painting a character for the instruction and consideration of future times. And since Mr Macaulay has so prominently brought forward what is to be blamed in Marlborough's career, (and no one can condemn more severely than we do his treachery to James, though it has been so long praised by Whig writers,) we hope he will record with equal accuracy, and tell as often, that he refused repeatedly the offer of the government of the Low Countries, with its magnificent appointment of £60,000 a-year, made to him by the Emperor after the battle of Ramilies, lest by accepting it he should induce dissension in the alliance; that his private correspondence with the Duchess evinces throughout the war the most anxious desire for its termination; and that, at the time when the factious Tory press represented him as prolonging hostilities for his own sordid purposes, he was anxiously endeavouring to effect a general pacification at the conferences of Gertruydenberg, and writing a private and very earnest letter to his nephew, the Duke of Berwick, then at the head of the French army, urging him to use his influence with Louis XIV. in order to bring about a peace. We would strongly recommend Mr Macaulay to consider the advice we have heard given to a historian in the delineation of character: "Make it a point of conscience to seek out, and give

with full force, all authentic *favourable* anecdotes of persons whom you *dislike*, or to whose opinions you are *opposed*. As to those whom you like, or who are of your own party, you may exercise your own discretion."

There is another fault, and it is a very serious one, in Macaulay, which he would do well to correct or avoid in the future editions and volumes of his work. This is the disposition which he evinces, whenever it is possible, to recount anecdotes which will *detract* from the fame of any celebrated character. He is always on the look-out for something which will *denigrer* the great, whether men or women. To a biographer with this disposition it must have been a real luxury to recount the anecdotes given in his admirable essay on Frederick the Great, about the parings of cheeses and ends of candles served out to Voltaire. It is not every day that a biographer brings down two first-rate birds with one shot, and wounds a hero and a philosopher with the end of a candle. We enter our deliberate protest against such a tendency. We do not wish the truth to be concealed; but as little do we wish truth of a degrading kind to be studiously *sought out and ostentatiously paraded*. We know well that no man is a hero to his *valet de chambre:* we need no monitor to tell us that maids of honour are not all as cold as Diana. But there is no need to seek out their frailties. That faults will be found in every child of Adam is certain: if any one doubts it, let him look around him. But the great object of history and biography should be to elevate the mind, by the exhibition of the grand and the generous in thought or in action, not to lower it by the picture of what is vulgar or degrading.

We object also, in this most able writer, to the frequent use of sweeping and unqualified assertions, generally for rhetorical effect, or to magnify the fame of some favourite party or character, with sometimes little regard to the foundation which they may have in fact. He would do well to recollect the prudent advice of the rhetoricians of antiquity, "*Dolus latet in generalibus.*" Thus, to give only one example among a host which might be cited—He says of the Puritan bands by whose aid Cromwell overturned the monarchy—"In *England, Scotland,* Ireland, Flanders, the

Puritan warriors, often surrounded by difficulties, sometimes contending against threefold odds, not only *never failed to conquer*, but never failed to destroy and break in pieces whatever force was opposed to them."—Vol. i. p. 122. Far be it from us to detract from the well-earned fame which British troops, by whomsoever led, and under whatever banner, have so often earned in the field; and most cordially do we join in the shout of exultation raised by the generous banished Cavaliers, when, in one of the sieges in Flanders, they beheld one of Cromwell's brigades force a breach which the foreign engineers had pronounced impracticable. But admitting all that, it is not the less true, that when Mr Macaulay says that the other soldiers of the British empire, particularly the Scotch, were always defeated by the Puritans, he asserts a proposition not only unfounded, but directly contrary to the fact. We leave it to the historian of the Cavaliers to say whether, in any of the actions during the Great Rebellion, the Puritans were ever defeated by Prince Rupert and the Cavaliers; but, as regards the Scotch, we would remind Mr Macaulay what he is too well informed not to know, and which is familiar to every tyro in history, that the Royalist arms had come to prevail evidently over those of the Parliament, when the balance was cast the other way, and a decisive advantage given to the Parliamentarian forces by the arrival of 20,000 *Scotch* auxiliaries, by whose aid the battle of Marston Moor was gained; and that, even after the Royalist cause had been lost in England, Cromwell, with his veteran band of Puritans, was repulsed in his attack on Leslie's lines between Leith and Edinburgh, driven back by that able general to Dunbar, where his retreat to England was cut off, and he was so hemmed in that he would speedily have been *forced to surrender*, had not the Presbyterian ministers, imbued with a large share of Puritanical fanaticism, forced Leslie to leave his strong position on the hills, and descend to the plain, where he was defeated by the superior discipline of Cromwell's men. Of the repulse near Edinburgh, which had thus so nearly changed the whole fate of the war, and saved England from the tyranny of the Protectorate, we have the following account, taken from Balfour, in Mr Grant's very interesting history of the Castle of Edinburgh, a work equally distin-

guished by research, accuracy, and pictorial interest. Though the account is perhaps a little coloured from national partiality, the result which followed showed it is substantially well founded :—

"On Monday the 24th July, Cromwell at the head of his whole army, made a furious attack on the Scottish position. Exasperated by the result of a sortie made by Major-general Montgomery, who, at the head of two thousand dragoons, nearly routed 'their quhole armey, killed five colonells and lieutenant-colonells, mortally woundit Lieutenant-general Lambert and above five hunded souldiers,' the Puritans came on with great ardour, animated alike by enthusiasm and revenge, while twelve English ships of war opened their broadsides on Leith.

"As the English advanced, the rising sun shone full upon the long line of Scottish helmets that glittered above the rampart, and the regimental standards that, waving at intervals, marked the different corps. Immediately on their clearing the rocks and house of Restalrig, 'the place callit Jokis Lodge,' and advancing over the little level plain to the westward of Lochend, from the field batteries at the Quarryholes, the redoubts on the Calton, and the bastions of Leith, a simultaneous cannonade was opened; while a rolling fire of musketry ran along the whole Scottish line, from flank to flank, poured closely and securely over the long breastwork, throwing them into confusion, and immediately compelling them to retire in disorder, leaving two pieces of cannon, and the ground strewed with killed and wounded, behind them.

"Encircling Arthur's Seat, a strong column of infantry, a brigade of cavalry, and two pieces of cannon, attempted to enter the city by the southern road that led to the Pleasance. On this, Campbell of Lawers brought his regiment of musketeers, at double-quick march, up the glen, by the base of Salisbury Crags to the ruins of St Leonard's Chapel, and, taking an alignement behind the ridges and walls of the King's Park, poured from thence a deadly fire, which drove back the infantry in disorder. They threw aside their muskets, pikes, and collars of bandoleers, and fled, abandoning their cannon, which were brought off by the horse brigade. After this second repulse, Cromwell *sounded a retreat, and retired to Musselburgh*, where he evinced his piety by making stables of the churches and camp fuel of the pews. It was now the autumn of 1650, and the season was rainy and moist."*

Cordially concurring, as we do, with Mr Macaulay in his estimate of the beneficial effects of the Revolution of 1688, there is one peculiar benefit which he may possibly not bring so prominently forward as its importance deserves, and which, therefore, we are anxious to impress upon our readers. It is true that it purified the bench, confirmed the Habeas Corpus Act, closed the human shambles which the Court of King's Bench had been, pacified Scotland, and for above a century effected the prodigy of keeping Ireland quiet. But it did yet greater things than these; and the era of the Revolution is chiefly remarkable for the new dynasty having taught the Government *how to raise*

* *Memorials of the Castle of Edinburgh*, p. 156-7.

taxes in the country; and thus brought England to take the place to which she was entitled in the scale of nations, by bringing the vast national resources to bear upon the national fortunes. Charles I. had lost his crown and his head in the attempt to raise money—first legally, and then, when he failed in that, illegally—in the realm, adequate to the national defence. Cromwell had asserted the national dignity in an honourable way, only because his troops gave him the means of levying sufficient supplies, for the first time in English history, by the force of confiscations and the terror of the sword. But with the termination of his iron rule, and the restoration of constitutional sway at the Restoration, the old difficulty about supplies returned, and the Government, to all practical purpose, was nearly brought to a dead-lock. The Commons, now Royalist, would vote nothing, or next to nothing, in the way of money; and the nation was defeated and disgraced, from the impossibility of discovering any way of making it vote money for its own defence. But that which the Stuarts could never effect by appeals to honour, spirit, or patriotism, William III. and Anne soon found the means of accomplishing, by bringing into play, and enlisting on their side, different and less creditable motives. They did not oppose honour and patriotism to interest, but they contrived to rear up one set of interests to combat another. They brought with them from Holland, where it had been long practised, and was perfectly understood, the art of managing public assemblies. They no longer bullied the House of Commons—*they bribed it;* and, strange to say, it is to the entire success of the gigantic system of *borrowing, expending, and corrupting*, which they introduced, and which their successors so faithfully followed, that the subsequent greatness of England is mainly to be ascribed.

William III., on his accession, immediately joined the league of Augsburg against France—a league obviously rendered necessary by the exorbitant ambition and priest-ridden tyranny of Louis XIV.; and the contest, brought to a glorious termination by the treaty of Ryswick in 1697, was but a prelude to the triumphant War of the Succession, abruptly closed by the discreditable peace of Utrecht in 1714. That England was the life and soul of this alliance,

and that Marlborough was the right arm which won its glorious victories, is universally acknowledged; but what is not less true is not equally known, that it was the system of managing the House of Commons by means of loans, good places, and bribes, which alone provided the sinews of war, and prepared the triumphs of Blenheim and Ramilies. It is true the nation was, at first at least, hearty and unanimous in the contest, both from religious zeal for the Reformation, and national rivalry with France; but experience had shown, that when the prospect of private plunder, as in the wars of the Edwards and Henrys, did not arouse the public strength, it was a matter of absolute impossibility to get the House of Commons, as formerly managed, to vote the necessary supplies for any time together. No necessity, however urgent, no danger, however pressing,—no claims of justice, no considerations of expedience, no regard for their children, no consideration for themselves, could induce the English of those days to vote anything like an adequate amount of taxes. As this was the state of matters in this country at the time when the whole resources of the neighbouring kingdoms were fully drawn forth by despotic power, and Louis XIV. had two hundred thousand gallant soldiers under arms, and sixty sail of the line afloat, it is evident that, unless some method of conquering this reluctance had been devised, England must speedily have been conquered and partitioned, or have sunk into the rank of a third-rate power like Sweden. But William III., before the Protestant zeal cooled, and the old love of money returned, provided a new and all-powerful agent to combat it. He founded the national debt! He and Anne raised it, between 1688 and 1708, from £661,000 to £54,000,000. He tripled the revenue, and gave so much of it to the House of Commons that they cordially agreed to the tripling. He spent largely; he corrupted still more largely. He no longer attacked in front the battery; he turned it, got into the redoubt by the gorge, and directed its guns upon the enemy. He made the national interests in support of taxation more powerful than those operating to resist it. Thence the subsequent greatness and glory of England—for by no other possible method could the impatience of taxation, so strongly rooted in the nation, have been overcome,

or the national armaments have been placed on the footing rendered necessary, either for securing the national defence, or asserting the national honour. Had the Long Parliament succeeded in permanently fixing in the English people the invincible repugnance to taxation with which they themselves were animated, we should long since have been a province of France.

The whole Whig Ministers, from the Revolution to 1762, when they were dispossessed of power by George III. and Lord Bute, acted on this system of government by influence and corruption. Mr Macaulay's ample acquaintance with the memoirs, published and unpublished, of that period, will doubtless enable him to give numerous anecdotes on the subject, as true and as amusing as Marlborough's leaping from Lady Castlemaine's window, or James II.'s thraldom to Catherine Sedley. The memoirs on the subject that have recently come out, give details of corruption so barefaced and gross that they would exceed belief, if their frequency, and the testimony to their authenticity from different quarters, did not defy disbelief. It is now known that, when Sir Robert Walpole's parliamentary supporters were invited to his ministerial dinner, each of them found a £500 note under his napkin.

We do not blame the Whigs for this wholesale system of influence and corruption, which pervaded every class of society, and regulated the disposal of every office, from that of the humblest exciseman to the prime minister's. There was no other way of doing. But for it, Government would, a century and a half ago, have been brought to a stand, and the nation defeated and subjugated in the first serious external war in which it was engaged. We are no supporters of corruption or the influence of money, if higher and nobler principles of action can be brought into play, and rejoice that it has now for nearly a century been exchanged for the less offensive and demoralising, but not less effectual system of influence and patronage. But, though much higher motives are sometimes most powerful on extraordinary occasions, all experience proves that, at ordinary times, and in the long run, it is in vain to attempt to combat one interest but by another interest. If any man doubts it, let him try to persuade the Free-trade audiences at Manchester

to agree to a duty on cotton goods to uphold the navy, or the Irish in Ulster to agree to a rate to save their countrymen in Connaught from dying of famine, or the Scotch lairds to agree to a tax for a rural police, to preserve the peace and safety of their counties. We should rejoice if men, as a body, could be brought to act for the advantage of the country, from pure and honourable motives only; but, taking them as they are, we are thankful for any system which brings the selfish motives round to the side of patriotism, and causes parliamentary influence to save us from the Russian knout or French requisitions.

One of the most interesting and original parts of Mr Macaulay's work is the account he has given, in the first volume, of the manners and customs, habits of the people, and state of society in England, prior to the Revolution, compared with what now exists. In doing so, he has only exemplified what, in his admirable essay on history in the *Edinburgh Review*, he has described as a leading object in that species of composition; and it must be confessed that his example tends greatly to show the truth of his precept. This part of his work is learned, laborious, elaborate, and in the highest degree amusing. It is also in many respects, and in no ordinary degree, instructive. But it has the same fault as the other parts of his work—it is *one-sided*. It exhibits, in the highest degree, the skill of the pleader, the brilliancy of the painter, the power of the rhetorician; but it does not equally display the reflection of the sage or the impartiality of the judge. It savours too much of a brilliant party essay in the *Edinburgh Review*. Mr Macaulay's object is to *write up* the present times, and *write down* the past; and we fully admit he has done so with the greatest ability. But we are thoroughly convinced his picture, how graphic soever, is in great part deceptive. It tells the truth, and nothing but the truth, but not the whole truth. It represents the ludicrous and extreme features of society as its real and average characteristics; it bears, we are convinced, the same relation, in many respects, to the real aspect of the times of which it treats, which the burlesques of Mrs Trollope do to the actual and entire features of Transatlantic society. These burlesques are very amusing; they furnish diverting drawing-room reading; but would a

subsequent historian be justified in assuming them as the text-work of a grave and serious description of America in the nineteenth century? We have no doubt Mr Macaulay could produce an authority from a comedy, a tract, or a satire, for every fact he advances; but we have just as little doubt that hundreds of other facts, equally authentic and true, might be adduced of an opposite tendency, of which he says nothing; and therefore his charge to the jury, how able soever, is all on one side.

His object is to show that, in *every* respect, the present age is incomparably happier and more virtuous than those which have preceded it—a doctrine which has descended to him, in common with the whole Liberal party of the world, from the visions of Rousseau. We, who have a firm belief in human corruption, alike from Revelation and experience, believe such visions to be a perfect chimera, and that, after a certain period of efflorescence, decay and degradation are as inevitable to societies as to individual men. In some respects, Mr Macaulay is right. The present age is far richer, more refined, and more luxurious than any which has preceded it. In a material view, the higher and middle classes enjoy advantages, and are habituated to comforts, unknown in any former age. The chances of life have increased over the whole population twenty-five, in the higher classes at least forty per cent. Humanity has made a most cheering progress: the barbarity of former days is not only unknown, but seems inconceivable. A British tradesman is better clothed, fed, and lodged, than a Plantagenet baron. So far all is true; but *audi alteram partem.* Are we equally disinterested, magnanimous, and brave, with the nations or ages which have preceded us? Are the generous affections equally victorious over the selfish? Are the love of gain, the thirst for pleasure, the passion for enjoyment, such very weak passions amongst us, that they could be readily supplanted by the ardour of patriotism, the self-denial of virtue, the heroism of duty? Would modern England have engaged in a crusade for the deliverance of the holy sepulchre? Would the merchants of London set fire to their stock-exchange and capital, as those of Numantia or Saguntum did, to save it from the spoiler? Will Free-trade Hall ever overflow with patriotic gifts, as the Bourse at Moscow did in 1812? We have

laid out a hundred and fifty millions on railways, in the hope of getting a good dividend in this world: would we lay out one million in building another York Cathedral, or endowing another Greenwich Hospital? Have we no experience of an age

"When wealth accumulates and men decay?"

These are the questions an impartial judge will ask himself after reading Mr Macaulay's brilliant diatribe on the past in his first volume.

He tells us that the country gentlemen before the Revolution were mere ignorant country bumpkins, few of whom could read or write, and who, when they for once in their lives came up to London, went staring about on Holborn or Ludgate Hill, till a spout of water from some impending roof fell into their mouths, while a thief was fumbling in their pockets, or a painted denizen from some of the neighbouring purlieus decoyed them into her bower. Be it so. It was these country bumpkins who gained the battles of Cressy, Poitiers, Azincour, and Flodden; they built York Cathedral and St Paul's; their sons gained the victories of Sluys and La Hogue, of Ramilies and Blenheim; they were ennobled by the devotion and sufferings of the Cavaliers. We hope their well-fed, long-lived, and luxurious descendants would rise from their beds of down to do the same. He tells us the clergy of the age of Charles II. were almost all drawn from the very humblest classes, that their education was very imperfect, that they occupied so low a place in society that no lady's-maid, who had hopes of the steward, would look at them; and that they were often glad to take up with a damsel whose character had been blown upon by the young squire. Be it so: that age produced the Clarkes and the Cudworths, the Barrows and the Tillotsons, the Taylors and the Newtons, the Halls and the Hookers, of the Church of England; and their efforts stemmed the torrent of licentiousness which, in reaction against the cant of the Covenanters, deluged the country on the accession of Charles II. The schools and colleges in which they were bred had produced Milton and Spencer, Shakspeare and Bacon, John Locke and Sir Isaac Newton. We hope that the labours of their "honourable and reverend" successors, who have

been so highly educated at Oxford and Cambridge, and are so successful in attracting the regard of the high-born damsels who have failed at the Opera, Rottenrow, and Almacks, may be equally successful in eradicating the prevailing vices of the present age, and that, after the lapse of a century and a half, their works will occupy as high a place in general estimation.

To illustrate our meaning, we shall extract two paragraphs from a manuscript work on Contemporary History, which recently passed through our hands, and ask Mr Macaulay himself whether he can gainsay any fact it advances, and yet whether he will admit the justice of the picture which it draws.

"The British empire, from 1815 to 1848, exhibited the most extraordinary social and political features that the world had ever seen. No former period had presented so complete a commentary on the maxim, 'extremes meet.' It immediately succeeded the termination of a desperate and costly war, in the course of which the most herculean efforts for the national defence and the interests of the empire had been made; and it witnessed the abandonment of them all. Twenty years of desperate hostility had bequeathed to it untouched a sinking fund of fifteen millions annually; thirty-five years of unbroken peace saw that sinking fund extinguished. Protection to industry—support of the colonies—upholding of the navy, had been the watchwords of the nation during the war. Free trade, disregard of the colonies, cheap freights, became the ruling maxims during the peace which it had purchased. The only intelligible principle of action in the people seemed to be to change everything, and undo all that had been done. The different classes of society during this divergence became as far separated in station and condition as in opinion. The rich were every day growing richer, the poor poorer. The wealth of London, and of a few great houses in the country, exceeded all that the imagination of the East had conceived in the *Arabian Nights:* the misery of Ireland, and of the manufacturing towns, outstripped all that the imagination of Dante had figured of the terrible. The first daily exhibited during the season all the marvels of Aladdin's palace; the last, at the same period, presented all the horrors of Ugolino's prison.

"Undeniable statistics proved the reality and universality of this extraordinary state of things, which had become so common as to cease to attract attention. The income-tax returns established the existence of £200,000,000 annual income above £150, in Great Britain alone, by far the greater part of which was the produce of realised wealth; while the poor-law returns exhibited in the two islands four millions of paupers, or a full seventh of the population subsisting on public charity. The burden of the poor-rates in the two islands rose, before the close of the period, to £8,000,000 a-year, besides £1,300,000 for county rates. Population had increased fast, but crime far faster: it had, during forty years, advanced *ten times* as fast as the numbers of the people. General distress prevailed during the period among the working-classes, interrupted only by occasional and deceptive gleams of sunshine. So acute did it become in 1847 that a noble grant of £10,000,000 from the British Parliament alone prevented two millions of Irish dying of famine; as it was, 250,000 in that single year perished from starvation, and

as many, in that year and the next, were driven into exile from the United Kingdom. The people in Liverpool returned thanks to God when the inundation of Irish paupers sank to 2000 a-week. Glasgow, for two years, suffered under the infliction of above a thousand weekly, which in that short time raised its poor-rates from £20,000 to £200,000 a-year. During this protracted period of suffering, the feelings of the different classes of society became as much alienated as their interests had been. Rebellion broke out in Ireland; the West Indies were ruined, and the Chartists numbered their millions in England. The Treasury shared in the general distress. It had become impossible to raise funds from the nation adequate to its necessary expenses; and, at length, so pressing did the clamour for a reduction of taxation become, that it was seriously proposed, and loudly approved by a large and influential portion of the community, to sell our ships of war, disband our troops, and surrender ourselves unarmed to the tender mercies of the adjoining nations, when war with unwonted fierceness was raging both on the continent of Europe and in our Eastern dominions.

"Nor was the aspect of society more satisfactory in its social condition—the manners of the higher, or the habits of the lower orders. Intoxication, seemingly purposely encouraged by Government by a large reduction of the duties on spirits, spread the most frightful demoralisation through our great towns. Licentiousness spread to an unparalleled extent in the metropolis, and all the principal towns; and the amount of female corruption on the streets, and at the theatres, exceeded anything ever witnessed since the days of Messalina or Theodora. The drama was ruined: it was supplanted, as always occurs in the decay of nations, by the melodrama; the theatre by the amphitheatre. Drury Lane was turned into an arena for wild beasts, Covent Garden into an Italian Opera. The magnificent attractions of the opera exceeded anything ever witnessed before; but the warmth of its scenes, and the liberal display of the charms of the *danseuses*, did not prevent it from being nightly crowded by the whole rank, beauty, and fashion of the metropolis. A universal thirst for gain or excitement had seized the nation. No danger, however great, no immorality, however crying, was able to stop them, when there was the prospect of a good dividend. At one period, a hundred and fifty millions were wasted in loans to "healthy young republics," as the Foreign Secretary himself admitted in Parliament; at another, a still larger sum was laid out on domestic railways, not one half of which could ever produce anything. Three guineas a-night were habitually given for a single stall-seat at the opera, to hear a Swedish singer, during the railway mania: but then the occupant was indifferent—he put it down to the railway, and came there, reeling from the champagne and hock drank at a neighbouring hotel, at its expense. Most of these railways were mere bubbles, never meant to go on; when the fortunate projectors had got the shares placed at a premium in the hands of the widow and the orphan, they let the scheme go to the bottom.

"There was a great talk about religion, but the talkers were not always exclusively set on things above. Fine ladies sometimes asked a sly question on coming out of their third service on Sunday, or their second on Friday, what was the price of Great Westerns, or whether the broad or the narrow gauge was likely to carry the day. The reading of men was chiefly confined to the newspapers; of women to novels, or occasional morsels of scandal from scandalous trials. There was great talk about the necessity of keeping up the tone of public morality; but it was appearances, not realities, which were chiefly aimed at. 'Not to leave undone, but to keep unknown,' was the maxim of the London, as it had been of the Venetian dames; the delinquents who were punished were chastised, like the Spartan youths, not for what they had done, but for what they had let be discovered. So capricious was public opinion in this particular, in the very highest circles, that it was stated by the most popular author of the day, in the *Edinburgh Review*, that

the English women wakened every seven years, and massacred some unfortunate detected delinquent: they then fell asleep, satisfied with the sacrifice to propriety, for seven years, when they slaughtered another, and again sunk into a third septennial torpor. Meanwhile the morals of the manufacturing districts were daily getting worse; millions existed there who did not attend divine service on Sunday; hundreds of thousands who had never been in a church; thousands who had never heard the name of Jesus but in an oath. A hideous mass of heathen profligacy had arisen in the heart of a Christian land. From it thousands of both sexes were annually sent up to the metropolis to feed its insatiable passions, or sacrifice their souls and bodies on the altar of Moloch."

So far our unpublished manuscript. Mr Macaulay is too well acquainted with passing events not to know that every word in the preceding picture is true, and too candid not to admit that all these observations are just. But he knows there is something to be said on the other side. He is familiar with a counter set of facts; and he could in half-an-hour write two paragraphs on the state of the country during the same period, equally true and striking, which would leave on the mind of the reader an impression of a directly opposite character. We do not pretend to be able to rival him in the art of writing up a particular era, but, fortunately, our unpublished manuscript contains a little on the other side:—

"There is no period in the whole annals of Great Britain which, in point of power, glory, and general felicity, can be compared to the thirty years which followed the conclusion of the war. The energy which to so marvellous an extent had been developed during its progress, was now, with the exception of almost continued hostilities in India, entirely devoted to pacific objects. Industry flourished alike in the cities and the fields; it was hard to say whether the plough, the loom, or the sail were in the most prosperous condition. Population, during that period, advanced above fifty per cent; it increased in Great Britain and Ireland from 19,000,000 to 29,000,000 of souls. The exports of the nation, measured in official value, had increased from £52,000,000 to £150,000,000; its imports, in declared value, from £35,000,000 to £90,000,000. Its shipping, Foreign and British, had grown up from 3,500,000 tons to 7,000,000 tons. The metropolis had come to contain 2,300,000 souls: the largest aggregate of human beings in a single city, ascertained by authentic evidence, which had been collected together since the beginning of the world. The provincial towns had increased in a similar proportion; in several of them, particularly Manchester, Birmingham, Liverpool, and Glasgow, there were from three to four hundred thousand inhabitants.

"Agriculture, rural prosperity, and the comfort of the poor, had kept pace with this astonishing increase. There had been severe local distress at particular times; but these calamities had passed away like a summer cloud. The immense increase of imports showed how largely the middle classes had shared in the general prosperity; of articles of subsistence, how much the labouring orders had improved in their circumstances. Cultivation, undeterred by the progressive fall of prices, had crept up the mountain sides: a skilful and admirable system of draining had caused the morasses in the

plains to disappear, and added a third to the produce even of dry and fruitful soils. The nation was capable of maintaining itself by its supplies of food, if it had not deemed it more expedient to purchase a large portion at a cheaper rate from foreign states. An immense and costly system of internal communication, erected at a cost of £200,000,000, had brought the chief parts of the country within a day's journey of the other parts. Domestic and foreign peace alike prevailed during this blessed period: £40,000,000 of annual taxation was remitted, without making any considerable addition to the public debt; and such as was made was incurred, at one time, for the grant of £20,000,000 to purchase freedom for the West India slaves, at another, to bestow £10,000,000 on the relief of Irish suffering. Meanwhile the Anglo-Saxon race was rapidly spreading in every quarter of the globe: the North American colonies had come to number 2,000,000 of inhabitants. Slavery was eradicated in the West Indies: the whole peninsula of India, from Cape Comorin to the Himalaya snows, was conquered by our arms: China had been awed into submission; and new colonies planted in Australia, the progress of which exceeded anything yet recorded in the history of mankind."

Such is the other side of the picture presented by our manuscript correspondent. How is the historian to exhibit a true and faithful picture of the real state of the nation between such opposite and contradictory statements, both of which, so far as they go, are obviously well-founded? Evidently by combining *both*—by presenting with equal fidelity the light and shade in the picture. How entirely deceptive would the one account only, *though all perfectly true*, be, if not qualified and taken along with the other! It is this partial and one-sided exposition of the truth, accompanied by a general exaggerated style of composition, more than positive inaccuracy, that we complain of in Mr Macaulay. It is this statement of the facts on both sides which, amidst all our admiration for his genius, we often desiderate in his entrancing pages; and nothing but the adoption of it, and taking his seat on the *Bench instead of the Bar of History*, is required to render his noble work as weighty as it is able, and as influential in forming the opinion of future ages, as it unquestionably will be successful in interesting the present.

FREE-TRADE REFORM AND FINANCE

[BLACKWOOD'S MAGAZINE, April and May 1850]

At length signal-guns of distress have been fired from the Liberal fleet. Albeit stoutly denying the existence of any extraordinary suffering in Ireland, Ministers have brought forward a measure, based upon the admission of a distress there much exceeding anything which their opponents have alleged. Concealing or evading the loud cries of Colonial discontent, they have announced a policy implying a total revolution in Colonial government, and which never could have been conceded but from the consciousness of a vast amount of former maladministration. The Irish Reform Bill, the New System of Colonial Government, and the Financial Proposals, are *par excellence* the measures of the session. We are not surprised they are so. They are the natural complement and unavoidable consequence of three preceding years of Free Trade and a fettered Currency,

The policy of Government since 1846 having been entirely founded upon the interests of the towns against the country, of the consumers against the producers, of those who had a majority in the House of Commons over those who were still in a minority, it might naturally be expected that the consequent suffering would be most acutely felt in the producing parts of the empire—in those places where agriculture was the staple of life, where producers were many and consumers few, and where, necessarily, the measures of the British urban majority acted with unmitigated severity. Ireland and the Colonies were the places in which these circumstances combined, because they were both provinces in which rural districts were of

boundless extent, and towns few and of inconsiderable importance; in which wealth was in a great measure unknown, civilisation as yet, comparatively speaking, in its infancy; and mankind, yet occupied in the labours of the field, in felling the forest and draining the morass, were not congregated in the huge Babylons or Ninevehs, which are at once the distinctive mark and ineradicable curse of long-established civilisation. Ireland and the Colonies, therefore, were the places which suffered most, and in which discontent might be expected to be most formidable from the new system; and, accordingly, the first announcements of the Session of 1850 were of measures calculated, as Government supposed, to assuage the irritations and conciliate the affections of these important and avowedly discontented or suffering parts of the empire.

Ten years have not elapsed since Lord John Russell declared that we could not afford to have a Revolution every year, and that the Reform Bill had fixed the Constitution upon a basis which must not again be shaken. There can be no doubt of the justice of the observation; but the Liberals have now proved that their own measures have destroyed any stability or permanent system in government. That declaration was made before the grand and distinctive features of Liberal government had developed themselves: before Free Trade had crushed Agricultural Industry, and sapped the foundations of Colonial loyalty; and when no overbearing pressure from without reminded Ministers that the time had arrived when they must eat in their pledges. That time has now, however, come. Distress, all but universal, has spread among all the rural producers of the empire; Ireland, the West Indies, and Canada, as the most entirely agricultural districts, have been the first to suffer in consequence. Measures calculated, as they conceive, to allay the prevailing discontent, have been brought forward by Government at the very time when they themselves, and their organs in the press, were most strenuously denying that the new measures had produced anything but universal contentment and satisfaction throughout the empire.

The so-called Liberals have a very easy, and, as they deem it, efficacious mode of stifling or appeasing public

discontent, when it arrives at a formidable height. This consists in extending the suffrage among the querulous and suffering part of the people. They think that by so doing they will at once demonstrate their sympathy with the middle and lower classes, and secure, at least for some elections to come, a majority of electors for their support, from a natural feeling of gratitude towards the Government which has conceded to them the suffrage. This system has been acted upon now for above a quarter of a century. No sooner had the contraction of the Currency, by the bills of 1819 and 1826, rendered it wholly inadequate for the industry of the empire, and produced the dreadful distress from 1826 to 1830 among the manufacturing and commercial classes, than they brought forward the Reform Bill in March 1831, and gave a decided majority in the House of Commons to these suffering and discontented urban electors. They have existed ever since on the gratitude of these newly enfranchised city voters. And now, when the measures adopted, at the instigation of these urban constituencies, who compose three-fifths of the House of Commons, have totally ruined the West Indies, all but severed Canada from the empire, and spread unheard-of distress throughout Ireland, they have a remedy, as they conceive, ready, in the extension of the suffrage to the suffering population. In this way the successive stages of general suffering, induced by Free Trade and a fettered Currency—in other words, a system of general cheapening of everything—issue in successive degradations of the franchise. The monetary crisis of 1825 led, after five years of suffering, to the Reform Bill for Great Britain; and the Free-Trade crash of 1847 has issued, after three years of mortal agony, in the new Irish Reform Bill, and the announcement of provincial assemblies for the Colonies. If this system is continued for half a century more, it may reasonably be expected to lead, as it has done in France, to the introduction of universal suffrage. When everything is so cheapened that one-half of the population is landed in the workhouses, it is thought everything will be righted, wisdom at once imprinted on the measures of Government, and contentment diffused through the country by the paupers rising from

their straw mattresses to vote for the Liberal candidates in ballot-boxes put up at the corners of every street.

It must be confessed that this system of appeasing discontent by extending the suffrage has several things to recommend it. In the first place—and this is a most important consideration with Governments which behold the national resources wasting away under the influence of monetary and commercial measures, introduced by the dominant class—it costs nothing. The Chancellor of the Exchequer is sure to give it his cordial support. It is much easier to enfranchise two hundred thousand paupers or bogtrotters, than to issue two or three millions of exchequer bills to sustain their industry. The old panacea, so often applied in the days of Tory Government, when distress became general, to relieve it by issues of exchequer bills, has been totally discarded since a Liberal Administration, resting on the urban constituencies, was installed in power. It is now discovered that it is much better to give the sufferers votes. Undoubtedly it is cheaper; and in these days, when everything is sacrificed to cheapness, charity itself, albeit covering a multitude of sins, must be sacrificed to it with the rest. In the next place it implies, or is likely to lead to, no change of public measures, no reaction against the commercial policy which has produced the suffering. The new voters, it may be presumed, will support the Liberal Government which has enfranchised them; gratitude will bear Ministers over more than one contested election. The very suffering produced by Free-Trade measures will bring up a host of voters to the poll, who will, it is hoped, support from gratitude the Free-Trade candidate. That is a matter of immense importance. It is not only spreading division through the Protection camp, but recruiting in it for troops to themselves. And though, doubtless, it is scarcely to be expected that men in the long-run are to support representatives who are ruining them, yet it is often astonishing how long they will continue to do so from party influences. The poison, like the contagion of the cholera, floats in the air, without any one knowing whence it comes or whither it is going: and, at any rate, the opening of men's eyes is the work of time;

and the great thing with Liberal Governments is to secure immediate support, or tide over immediate difficulties.

For observe one very remarkable feature in both the Liberal measures intended to allay the discontent in the agricultural districts of the empire—that is, that there *is no change in the composition of the House of Commons.* That assembly, which, as it has the command of the public purse, rules by its majority the whole empire, remains the same. Three-fifths of its members are still returned by the urban constituencies of Great Britain. At the late division on the motion of Mr Disraeli, the majority of twenty-one was composed of *Scotch* members, most of them members for burghs. Thus the ruling power is lodged in the urban constituencies, and the suffering rural districts are to be pacified by an extension of their electors, which will confer no *real* political power, and benefit no human being. The majority for Free-Trade measures will be the same whether the Irish members are returned by seventy-two thousand or three hundred thousand voters ; or, rather, it is hoped by the promoters of the new measures, the Protectionists will be weakened by the change—because the Liberal candidate will be able to call himself the friend of the people, and to call on the new voters to record their votes for the Government which has enfranchised, and is ruining them.

So also in regard to the Colonies. The new measures announced by Lord John Russell propose to give provincial assemblies or parliaments to all the Colonies ; and so far they are founded on just principles. But they contain no provision for the representation of any of the Colonies *in the Imperial Parliament which meets in London.* The fatal majority of three urban to two rural representatives still determines the measures of Government, and will continue to do so, whatever provincial assemblies may be conceded to the Colonies. The invaluable nomination burghs, by means of which these distant parts of the empire, under the old constitution, were so effectually represented, still are extinct. Colonial wealth now can get into Parliament only by the favour of urban constituencies—that is, by adopting Free-Trade principles. Any man who stood upon the hustings in a British burgh, and proclaimed, "Justice to the Colonies," would be speedily thrown into a minority, from the

dread that his return might raise the price of sugar a penny a pound. Lord John Russell's Colonial parliaments will afford no remedy for this great and crying evil. It leaves the ruling power still in the hands of those actuated by an adverse interest, and directed by adverse desires. Give *real representation* to the Colonies indeed—give them a hundred members in the *Imperial* Parliament—and you make a mighty step in the principles of real, just government, and in reconstructing the bonds which once held together this great and varied empire. But to give them *local assemblies which have no real power*, at least in the general legislation of the empire, and which are doomed to sit by and be the impotent spectators of their own and their constituents' ruin, by the burgh-directed measures of the Imperial Parliament, is to mock them with a shadow of constitutional privileges which, in this age of intelligence, will not long be borne. It is giving the means of organising discontent, without those of averting disaster; and preparing, in those powerless provincial assemblies, men for the assertion of rights which, as was the case with North America, will one day cause the tearing asunder and dismemberment of the empire.

Nineteen years have elapsed since, in the very first paper on Parliamentary Reform in this Magazine, we pointed out the fatal effect of the extinction of Colonial representation by schedules A and B as the grand defect of the Reform Bill; and predicted that it would, if not remedied, lead to the dissolution of the empire.* Consequences, since that time, have followed precisely as we predicted. The short-sighted urban majorities of the dominant island have perseveringly pursued their separate and immediate interests, until they have ruined the West Indies, to make sugar cheap—all but ruined Ireland, to make oats cheap—and rendered agricultural distress universal in Great Britain, to make bread cheap. The discontent produced by these measures having become universal among the rural producers in the empire, Government, thinking they are applying a remedy to the most suffering parts, propose to extend the rural suffrage in Ireland, by lowering the existing suffrage of ten pounds, requisite to enfranchise on a piece of ground, to

* See article on Parliamentary Reform, May 1, 1831; reprinted in *Alison's Essays*, vol. i. p. 32, 40.

an eight-pound interest, and creating everywhere provincial parliaments in the Colonies. They never were more mistaken. What is really wanted in the Colonies and in Ireland is not so much an extension of voters or local parliaments, but a *just system of government at home.* Fiscal measures, which shall secure their interests, are what they require; and they can only be passed by the Imperial Parliament. What these measures are is well known: you have only to take up any file of the Jamaica, Sydney, or Montreal papers to see what are the sentiments of the Colonies. Introduce Colonial representation, in numbers adequate to their wealth, population, and importance, into the Parliament of Great Britain, and the effect will be immediate. Measures such as they desire will soon be carried, and the threatened dismemberment of the empire averted. Delay or refuse the possession of real power to these important parts of the British dominions, and you only aggravate existing discontent, and accelerate approaching dismemberment. To suppose you can now alleviate Irish suffering by quadrupling its electors, and stifle Colonial discontent by giving them local parliaments, is as absurd as if it had been proposed to still the storm of indignation raised in all the manufacturing towns of Great Britain by the suffering consequent on the contraction of the Currency, by giving the complainers all votes for their respective town-councils.

Although, however, for twenty years past, we have anticipated with certainty the ultimate extension of the suffrage to a still lower class of voters, as the unavoidable consequence of the Reform Bill, yet we must admit that we did not anticipate the *mode* in which the necessity for this extension was to be brought about. We thought it would arise from the increase of the unenfranchised population, and the loud cry for electoral privileges on the part of the inferior urban or working population. Not at all: a very different reason is now assigned for the extension of the suffrage in Ireland. It is not the increase of the unenfranchised, but the *diminution of the enfranchised,* which is assigned as the reason for the change. It is said there are now only 72,000 voters in Ireland, instead of 250,000, which there should be, and which it was calculated the Reform Bill would bring up to

the poll. Mr Cobden boasts that he has more constituents in the West Riding than there are in all the counties in Ireland put together. We have no doubt the remark is well founded; although the fact of so numerous a constituency having selected the man who made the boast, augurs but little for the wisdom, if imitated, of the measures which we may expect from the popularly elected representatives for the sister kingdom. But the material thing to observe is this: A great and important change on the Reform Bill—an innovation on the foundations which, we were told, were *non tangenda non movenda* of the new Constitution, is vindicated on account of the *immense destruction of the former freeholders which has taken place within these few years.* We have long been aware of the fact: we adverted to it in the most pointed manner, in a late article on the effects of Free Trade.* But we little expected that our observations were so soon to be confirmed from so high a quarter, and that the first breach in the Constitution, as fixed by the Reform Bill, was to be justified on the avowed destruction of the freeholders of Ireland which the Reform measures have effected.

For what is it which has occasioned such a chasm in the freeholders at this time, and rendered it necessary, on the admission of Ministers themselves, to lower the suffrage to an £8 interest, if we would marshal anything like a competent number of freeholders round the Reform banners? It is in vain to refer to the famine of 1846. That famine occurred three years ago: it was bountifully relieved by the British Government; and since its termination we have had two fine harvests, those of 1847 and 1849, for each of which a public thanksgiving was returned. A bad harvest does not destroy some hundred thousand electors. If it does, there are heirs who succeed in ordinary circumstances to the freeholds, and form as respectable an army of electors as their fathers had done. What has become of all the heirs of the starved electors, if they were really starved? What has become of the freeholds which they formerly held? The answer is obvious, and has been now officially returned by Government, and made the foundation of a great constitutional change. THEY HAVE BEEN DESTROYED BY THE

* See "Free Trade at its Zenith": *Blackwood's Magazine*, December 1849. *Alison's Essays*, vol. i. p. 652.

FREE-TRADE MEASURES. The Reform Bill, in its ultimate effects, has crushed the brood whom it warmed into life. Above 200,000 holders of land, in Ireland, have disappeared, or been reduced below the line which qualifies for electors, since 1845. It is now admitted that they were, for the most part, the highest class of cultivators ; for the extension of the suffrage is justified on the fearful diminution of their numbers.* So rapid has been their destruction, so fearful the process of deterioration they have undergone, that out of above 900,000 holders of land who are still in Ireland, only 72,000 could be found qualified under the Reform Act ; and, to augment the number of these, it is necessary to lower the franchise to £8. Eight pounds a-year is little more than the average maintenance of a pauper in England ; and we need not say that the holders of Irish tenements have scarce ever any other source of income. But such is the misery which Free Trade measures have spread in Ireland, that it is there the standard of a freehold qualification.

It is in vain to refer to the 40s. freeholders of England as affording a precedent or a parallel to town franchise. Everybody knows that the 40s. freehold—originally, when established in the time of Henry VI., a measure of landed property worth £20 or £30 a-year at this time—had come, from the change in the value of money, to be a mere house qualification. No one supposes that the 40s. freeholder *lives on his* 40s. ; it is the value merely of the cottage garden or paddock which he holds in freehold. He *lives* on extraneous resources, the wages of labour, realised means, or

* From a Parliamentary paper recently published, the decrease in county tenements in Ireland since 1846 has stood thus (April 7, 1850) :—

	In 1846.	In 1850.
Under £4, . . .	500,387	429,600
From £4 to £5, . . .	79,614	76,794
From £5 to £6, . .	63,113	49,954
From £6 to £7, . .	41,113	39,359
All above £8, . .	332,111	329,915
	1,016,338	925,512
	925,512	
Decrease, . .	90,826	

The mere diminution of *numbers* in the Irish tenements would not, from this Return, if it is to be relied on, appear to be so much as a tenth of the whole. It is the decline in the *income* of their occupants, from the effect of low prices, which has rendered the changes necessary. The number of holdings and *tenements*, it is to be observed, is very different from that of *occupants*,—many tenements being often held by one cottar.

the aid of his family. But the £8 tenant in Ireland *lives* on the subject which qualifies him. In nine cases out of ten, he has no other means of livelihood whatever, and the franchise is the measure of his whole substance. It is little better, in most cases, than the income of an English pauper; but such as it is, we have no doubt it is all that Free-Trade measures will allow the great majority of Irish cultivators to earn; and that, unless the franchise is to dwindle away till the Irish counties in many cases become Gattons and Old Sarums, it is absolutely indispensable to enfranchise such a miserable and destitute class. But we did not expect, amidst all the gloom of our anticipations from the effects of the Reform Bill, and its consequent Free-Trade measures, that this misery and destitution were to reach such a height, that it was to be proclaimed by Lord John Russell himself, and made the ground of the first great breach in his own Constitution!

It is not surprising that Government, amidst all the professions of confidence in the national resources, and assertions of general prosperity from Free-Trade measures, should be thus, in their legislative acts, betraying a secret consciousness of the rapid decline of agricultural remuneration, and of the existence of widespread Colonial distress. The prospects of the cultivators, both at home and in the Colonies, are gloomy in the extreme. The price of wheat is now known; it has been judicially fixed, at least in Scotland. The *fiar* prices in that country are, on an average, £1, 16s. for wheat, and 14s. for oats; instead of 51s. for the former, and 24s. for the latter, which they were three years ago, before the Irish famine set in. Good wheat is selling at this moment, in the Haddington market, at £1, 13s. 6d. a quarter—lower than it has been for a hundred and fifty years. In the face of all this, importation of foreign grain is undergoing no diminution; and with prices at 38s. a quarter, above nine-tenths of the supply of the metropolis is derived from foreign parts.* Black cattle

* Take, for example, the Return for the week ending May 4, 1850:—

	Wheat.	Barley.	Oats.	Malt.
English, . .	2,140	750	1,020	...
Irish, . .	...	...	...	...
Foreign, . .	17,540	8,760	38,610	...

—*Times*, May 4.

have fallen in the proportion of ten to six, or forty per cent; and although the rents of sheep-farms have as yet, from the high prices of wool, not been materially affected, yet it is well known that they too will ere long share in the general decline. Rents are in most parts of Ireland irrecoverable: the misery in many of its Unions equals that of the worst period of the famine. Rents in Scotland will, at next term-day, be postponed: the tenants, acknowledging their inability to pay, generally are already asking for time; and it is well understood on both sides, that if the present low prices continue, the arrears, now fast accumulating, will become irrecoverable. On England it is unnecessary to dwell: it has spoken out in a voice which can neither be mistaken, nor pretended to be unheard.

But why go into details to illustrate a fact which, so far from being denied, is openly admitted, and even gloried in by the Free-Traders? In a late paper on Free Trade, we estimated the decline in the value of agricultural produce, in the British islands, in consequence of free trade in grain, at £75,000,000, or a fourth of its amount. But the Free-traders tell us, and apparently with reason, that this is too low an estimate. Mr Villiers, in seconding the Address in the House of Commons, calculated the saving of the people, in the consumption of all the kinds of food, since 1847, at £91,000,000; and if to this is added the price of the 12,000,000 quarters of all sorts of grain, which were imported in the course of 1849, estimated at the moderate average of 20s. a quarter, the loss to the agricultural interest will be £103,000,000. But this is evidently too high, as the prices of 1847 were scarcity prices, owing to the famine in Ireland; and deducting £13,000,000 on that account, there will remain £90,000,000 at the very least which has been lost in one year to the agricultural interest of Great Britain and Ireland. This is more than *a third* of its amount, which may be taken, under the reduced scale of prices, for three years prior to the Irish famine, at £250,000,000 annual value.

But this, it is said, is all a landlords' question: the community at large, and, above all, the borough electors who rule the empire, have no interest in it. A landlord's question truly! Why, the whole *land* rents of the two islands,

abstracting from them those of houses, are under £60,000,000 annually ;* and a loss of £90,000,000 a-year is a landlords' question only! It is, at least, as much a tenants' question as a landlords'; and as there are now 750,000 holders of land in the two islands of Great Britain and Ireland, amounting with their families to 2,500,000 souls, this body, one and all of whom have been impoverished by the change, must be taken as a clear addition to the landlords, who have been directly and deeply injured by the same causes. And what are we to say to the agricultural labourers, mechanics, millers, wheelwrights, and artificers, who depend directly, immediately, and almost entirely, on the market for the produce of their industry among the rural population? At the very least, their incomes would all decline a half, and they, with their families, amount to some millions more. And this is what the Free-Traders call a landlords' question!

But, in truth, we deprecate, and that in the most earnest manner, all these calculations of class loss or suffering, so far as they proceed on the idea that it is possible for one class to suffer without every other speedily doing the same. Such arguments and topics were never heard of in Great Britain till the Reform Bill gave *one class* in society, viz. the urban shopkeepers, the command of the British Empire. We acknowledge one only interest in the whole community, and that is the interest of all classes ; we acknowledge one only family—that is, the whole British people. Their real interests are, and ever must be, the same. It is impossible, in one community, that one great interest can be suffering while others are thriving. Such a thing might happen for a time, when the manufacturing interest was prosperous from a sudden extension of the export sale in some considerable foreign markets ; but such a gleam of sunshine must be temporary only, if not accompanied by a simultaneous growth in the great and only durable issue for goods—the home market. The whole manufactures exported at present—one

* England, ... £47,000,000
Scotland, ... 3,500,000
Ireland, ... 8,000,000

£58,500,000

Apart, in the three kingdoms, from rents of houses, which amount to about £15,000,000 more.

of the most prosperous years, so far as the export sale goes —are about £60,000,000 a-year. The manufactures taken off by the home market are estimated, by the most experienced authorities, at £120,000,000. Of the £60,000,000 exported, about £16,000,000 goes to our own Colonies, so that the home and colonial market takes off yearly £136,000,000 ; all foreign markets put together, £44,000,000.

In other words, the home and colonial market is more than *three times all foreign markets put together*. How is it possible after this to deny that a serious and lasting blow, struck at the rural producing interests in the British islands and Colonies, must ere long react, and that too with terrible effect, on the prosperity of our manufacturers ? Mr Villiers boasts that Free Trade has cut £91,000,000 off the remuneration of the British farmers. Is it not evident that, assuming this to be true, the greater part of this sum is cut off the funds which pay in the home market ? and if so, how long will our £120,000,000 consumed in the home market be in sinking to £80,000,000, or some still lower figure ? And will Manchester and Glasgow be much benefited, if they gain £10,000,000 or £12,000,000 annually in the foreign market, and lose £40,000,000 or £50,000,000 in the home ?

Already it has become painfully evident that this effect is taking place in this country. Ministers boast of the exports having increased above £10,000,000 in 1849 over what they were in 1848, and of their having now turned £60,000,000 a-year. Let it be supposed that this is all to be put down to the account of Free Trade, and that our Indian victories, the pacification of Europe, the crushing of revolution in France, and the impulse given to American purchase by Californian gold, had nothing at all to do with the matter. Is the country prosperous ?—are the railways prosperous ?—are poor-rates declining ?—is labour in request either in the rural or urban districts? The facts are *notoriously the reverse*. At this moment above ten thousand looms in Manchester are preparing to put their mills upon the short time of forty hours a-week. The railways never were so low : at an average, their stock is worth little more than *a third* of what it was three years ago. Much

was said in Parliament of the decrease of poor-rates by £300,000 or £400,000 a-year. That is *entirely owing* to the fall in the price of provisions, which at once, and materially, lessened the cost of maintaining the paupers. Had the rates fallen really in proportion to the decline in the price of provisions, they would have gone down fifty per cent, or above £2,000,000 annually. A decline of a few hundred thousand pounds a-year only, in such circumstances, was in reality not a fall, but a rise. And in Scotland, the poor-rates for 1849, despite the fall in the cost of maintaining the paupers, were higher than in 1848, or than in any preceding year: they rose from £544,000 a-year to £576,000. As to Ireland, it is admitted on all hands that its condition was never worse, even during the worst periods of the famine.

Now, the real question which it behoves the moneyed interest, and especially the fundholders, to consider, and that most seriously, is this :—How do they expect that the interest on their bonds or the dividends on their stock are to be paid, if this ceaseless and progressive *decline in the resources of their debtors* is to go on? How are the dividends raised for payment of the national creditors, or the interest provided to meet private mortgages, on which so large a part, probably two-thirds, of the realised capital of the country depends? Is it not entirely from the exertions of the producing classes, who, or whose fathers, became debtors in these varied transactions? But is it possible that the security of creditors can escape being shaken, if the resources of their debtors are continually declining? In private life we are never mistaken on this subject. If a creditor sees his debtor's funds wasting away under improvident or absurd management, or a landlord sees his tenants running out his land by scourging and ruinous crops, he at once takes the alarm. But with the public creditors the case is just the reverse. They sit by and see the indirect taxes, upon the faith of which their money was advanced, repealed one after another for a long course of years; and the national armaments, upon which the public safety and the independence of the country depend, threatened with ruin by an ignorant, blind, and selfish democracy; and it never enters into their imaginations for a moment to entertain the least apprehension for their own payments. They think, though every other

interest in the country is ruined, they will stand erect amidst the wreck. Deceived by the perfect regularity with which, under the Protection System, their interest has been paid for the last hundred and fifty years, they cannot conceive that it should ever be otherwise. They would as soon expect to see the sun not rise in the morning, as the dividends on the three-per-cents not paid in January and June. But a little consideration must show that this confidence may ere long be found to be misplaced. The dividends are paid entirely out of the national income: whatever seriously affects or diminishes the national income so much diminishes the fund from which they must be drawn. The ninety millions which Mr Villiers boasts has been cut off from the remuneration of agriculture has made a fearful chasm in it—probably not less than a third of its whole amount. Let this continue for a few years, and the payment of the dividends will become impossible. Then the moneyed interest, whose selfish rapacity has occasioned all the mischief, will share in the general ruin they have created.

It is hard to say whether, as society is now constituted and power distributed in this country, the fundholder has most to fear from years of general suffering or from periods of transient prosperity. Is the nation flourishing, are exports increasing, taxes well paid, a surplus revenue beginning to appear, and a huge store of useless and costly bullion accumulated in the bank? We are immediately told the surplus must be devoted to the remission of taxes: it is dangerous to leave the Treasury full; it is a temptation to Government, and serves to feed the younger sons of the aristocracy. No matter how fleeting the surplus may be, though it has arisen from an accidental combination of circumstances which will probably disappear before the year is out—and it is well known, taxes once taken off are very rarely reimposed—that transient surplus must be instantly relinquished for the *permanent* remission of taxes. Are times adverse, do the heavens threaten monetary squalls, and is the import of grain and export of sovereigns likely to lay, as in 1847, half the commercial world on their beam-ends? Instantly the cry gets up that the taxes cannot be paid; that the national expenditure is shamefully extravagant; that the army must be disbanded, the ships of the line sold, and the national

independence trusted to the generous cosmopolitan spirit of the Americans, or the unambitious disposition of the Czar. In both circumstances the national safety, and with it the security of the public creditor, are endangered : in the first, by the permanent remission of revenue, in consideration of a transient gleam of prosperity ; in the last, by a permanent abandonment of the national defences, in consequence of a temporary period of disaster. And as we inevitably pass now, and must ever pass, under our wise and judicious system of Free Trade and a Fettered Currency, from the one to the other, it is evident that not a year passes over our heads that the security of the fundholders is not more and more endangered, and this by the effects of the very system which their own selfish and class legislation has introduced.

It is to this point—the *inevitable* reaction of agricultural distress upon commercial prosperity and the general resources of the empire—that we anxiously wish to direct our readers' attention. The theory of the Manchester school is, "Give us a sufficient amount of imports, and the exports will take care of themselves." They care not how widely they may prostrate the industry of the country, so as they get a profitable trade to themselves. But the point they have now to consider, is, *Can they secure this profitable trade to themselves*, if the industrial resources of this country—in other words, their customers' means of paying for their goods—are daily declining? That our *imports* are constantly increasing is true : it is what the Protectionists always predicted would be the case. But that increase is no index to national prosperity : on the contrary, it is the forerunner of national distress, because it implies a progressive supplanting of our own industry by that of foreigners. The following extract from the Returns of Imports for January 1850, ending 5th February 1850, will show how largely the productions of foreign countries are trenching upon those of our own :—

	Month ending 5th Feb. 1849.	1850.
Silk, thrown, lb.	13,847	71,600
Sheep Wool,	1,212,993	1,957,632
Gloves, pairs,	159,776	270,091
Silk Broad Stuffs,	13,036	22,124
——— Ribbons,	8,946	13,768
Potatoes, cwt.	6,793	190,511
Bacon, do.	2,537	8,036
Beef, do.	4,611	6,939
Pork, do.	2,038	6,308

It is the same with nearly all the other articles. How our manufacturers and artisans are to go on, any more than our farmers, striving against this prodigious and rapid increase of foreign importations, it is for us to say; but probably experience will, ere long, enlighten their understandings on this subject.

Indeed, this inevitable reaction of domestic distress, in trade as well as agriculture, against the Free-Trade System, has already set in. We make the following extracts from the Circular of Messrs T. and H. Littledale and Co. of Liverpool, perhaps the greatest brokers in the world, for Monday, 4th March 1850 :—

	Import of Cotton.	
	From Jan. 1 to March 5, 1849.	From Jan. 1 to March 5, 1850.
Bales, ...	328,523	267,666
Sales of do., . . .	464,070	368,950
Home consumption, .	305,040	207,960
Stock at this date, . .	384,230	518,170

Here is a decline from 3 to 2 in all branches of the cotton trade, since the two first months of last year, *except in stocks*, in which there is an increase from 4 to $5\frac{1}{4}$. We recommend this to the attention of the gentlemen in Manchester who introduced the Free-Trade System. We shall not imitate their example by saying it is a "Cotton Lords' Question," with which the public generally has no concern.

In the close of the same Circular it is stated :—

"General Remarks.—The month of February affords little matter for comment. It has been a particularly dull month in business, and, when contrasted with the energy and speculative excitement of January, the sudden change appears the more striking. There is probably no *one* cause to which this can be attributed, but principally, no doubt, from a reaction, the invariable consequence of over-activity. The old complaints of railway depression and Continental disquiet may have had some influence; but the large arrivals of some articles, Tea, for instance, of which *twenty-five* cargoes have come to hand in five weeks, and the near approach of the import season for Sugar, Coffee, and other produce, taken in connexion with the advance of prices at the opening of the year, have deterred the wholesale houses from operating beyond their immediate wants.

"*Great complaints are made of the bad state of the country shopkeepers in the agricultural districts. We have closely questioned some of our wholesale grocers and tea-dealers, who assure us that there is no disguising the fact that such is the case, and that the general answer received from travellers is, 'they can get neither money nor orders.*' The serious falling off in the deliveries of sugar, coffee, tea, and cocoa, for the two months of this year, compared with those of the last, but too truly confirms these complaints, and are perhaps the most alarming features in our present prospects. As given in Prince's Public Prices-Current of 1st instant, they stand as follows :—

	1850.	1849.	1848.
Sugar, . .	37,006	43,408	42,368 tons.
Coffee, .	3,795,712	4,907,691 pounds.	
Cocoa, . .	450,774	558,888 „	
Tea, . .	5,375,648	5,502,931 „	

It is evident that squalls are approaching, which, indeed, under our present Free-Trade and Monetary System, are the inevitable results of a brief period of prosperity; and let it be recollected, when another crisis does arrive, as arrive it will, the consequences will be far more disastrous than the last. *Then* the agricultural interest was prosperous, because the Corn Laws were not repealed; and the magnitude of the home markets sustained the nation during the dreadful commercial crisis which prostrated so large a part of the foreign manufacturers. Now the case is just the reverse—distress is beginning with the home markets; and the agricultural population, so far from supporting the manufacturing in their difficulties, will be fain to recur to them for support in their distresses. Hundreds of thousands of agricultural labourers, thrown out of bread by the effects of Free Trade, will be crowding into the towns as they did into the great cities in the later periods of the Roman Empire, in the hope of finding that employment from the wealth of the urban population, or that relief from their charities, which they can no longer look for in their native seats.

A highly distinguished officer and writer, who will not readily be suspected of a leaning towards Tory principles, General Sir William Napier, the eloquent historian of the Peninsular War, has lately written a letter, which has appeared in the columns of the *Observer*, portraying the effects of Free Trade upon the fate and independence of the nation in future times, in such powerful and graphic colours, that we cannot resist the satisfaction of giving it additional publicity through the columns of this Magazine:—

"Free Trade means an unrestricted intercourse, and exchange of productions, natural or artificial, amongst all the civilised nations of the world. Trace the effect of this general Free Trade, if such a thing could be attained. It must be that all nations, according to their skill and energy, will draw forth and make the most of their natural productions: one nation may be a little more skilful, a little more energetic than the rest; but, generally speaking, the amount of civilisation and consequent knowledge will be equal at first, or will be soon equalised by this free intercourse. Will not the result be, that each nation must take rank in the world according to

the extent of its natural and artificial resources. What will that lead to? Why, that England will sink from the first rank in the world to the fifth or sixth rank, as it cannot be contended that her natural resources, though now more drawn forth, are really equal to those of North America, of Russia, of France, of Germany, or even of Spain and Italy; and we may look forward to the South American kingdoms, and independent Canada, and Australia, as countries destined to overtop her. It will be said, Englishmen are braver, more enterprising and skilful, than other people; more thoughtful and long-sighted. That would be a poor argument, and a presumptuous one as regards Frenchmen and Americans, and would be no argument at all against Australians and Canadians, both being Saxon. But if it were a solid ground for hope, how is it that those superior qualities can be brought into play? Why, surely, by subtle contrivances of policy, which will give them free scope. What are those contrivances? Commercial treaties, supported by arms; that is the policy which has, and the only policy which can, raise a small country, like England, to be the head of the world. How else has she risen? Can it be supposed that a plain, unambitious policy of merely exchanging productions with other nations will raise her, or keep her, above her natural level? No! she must use her subtilty to overreach other nations, and her energy and courage to maintain her superiority; and then, with war and overreaching, away goes Free Trade. If courage, energy, and subtilty are laid aside, England sinks, as I said, to a fifth-rate power, because her natural resources are less than those of other nations; and, by Free Trade, she will teach those who do not know their own resources how to find their value.

"The world is not now as it was two hundred years ago. There are no new countries to discover,—no new sources of riches that can be held in monopoly, or to be found out of the bounds of the civilised world. Look at California. Can the Americans keep it to themselves? All the world goes there. England must then give up her commercial policy, which for centuries, whether good or bad, has certainly been compatible with advancing greatness, and she must start in a new race, with nations superior to her in natural resources, and with the weight of £800,000,000 of debt on her back; and to obtain even a place in this race, proposed by herself, she must break up all her artificial system, with the social relations established under it; thus destroying the fortunes and happiness of multitudes, inviting revolution, and risking the extinction of her debt, which will add hundreds of thousands of miserable broken creditors to the multitude of revolutionists."

This is ably and manfully spoken. That it is true, is now in the course of such clear demonstration to the nation, that it will ere long bring home conviction to the most prejudiced. But it is a curious fact, illustrative of the truth of the principles we have so long maintained in this Magazine, that such an exposition of the effects which Reform has produced, by vesting the Government of the nation in the urban constituencies, should come from a gallant officer, the historian of the Peninsular War, and whose zeal for Reform was known to have been so ardent, that certain proposals were made to him from a certain quarter when "the Bill" was thought to be endangered, which he at once spurned, as might have been

expected from a soldier and gentleman of his elevated character.

There is another Napier equally celebrated on another element, whose opinions have been recently as strongly expressed on the effects of Reform, and its offspring Free Trade, on our national defences. All the world is familiar with the energetic letter which Admiral Sir Charles Napier has lately published, on the alarming decline of our naval forces. It may be that our Manchester politicians, and their disciples in the Cabinet, by studying their Trades' Circulars, and occasionally sharpening their intellects by declamations on the hustings on the extravagance of the national armaments, and the expediency of selling our ships of the line and disbanding our troops, in anticipation of the millennium which is approaching, are better judges of the probable issue of a land contest than the Duke of Wellington, whose opinion has been equally strongly expressed on the subject, or the historian of, and actor in, the Peninsular War; and of the chances of maritime warfare, than the hero who established the throne of Don Pedro by the victory of Lisbon, and saved the Turkish empire from dismemberment at Acre. That is no doubt possible, though we can hardly regard it as very probable. But if such a catastrophe, as our immortal Field-marshal and these two very eminent warriors anticipate, does occur—if Great Britain, cast down to the rank of a fifth-rate power, finds its maritime superiority destroyed, and its colonies lost—if its fleets are blockaded in their harbours, and its manufacturing millions are thrown back on ruined landlords and bankrupt master-manufacturers for their daily bread, let it be always recollected it is no more than has been distinctly foreshadowed to them by those best qualified to form a correct judgment on the subject, and no more than they have brought upon themselves, by their blind adherence to a selfish policy.

To all these disasters, present and future, the Free-Traders have one set-off to apply, and that is the increased consumption of food, which they suppose has taken place in the country in consequence of their measures. Sir R. Peel contended strongly that the five million quarters of wheat alone imported in 1849, afforded decisive evidence of the

increased wellbeing of the working classes. If the right honourable baronet will take the trouble to travel through any of the grain districts of the country, he will perceive at once how fallacious this argument is. The barnyards never were so full at this season in any former year. Every farmer has held his stock who was not forced to sell. The nation has, since the last harvest, been fed by foreigners to an unprecedented extent. Ten millions have been sent out of the country to buy foreign wheat, and of course lost to British industry. The five millions and a half of quarters of wheat imported have been less an addition to the national consumption than a *transference* of that consumption from British farmers to foreigners. At least a half of the present harvest will be rolled over to next year. If we are blessed with another fine harvest, there will be the crop of a year and a half, besides ten or twelve millions imported in 1851, to stock the market. Prices in all probability will be much lower than they are at present.

We are always reminded that in 1835 prices were 39s. 5d. on an average of the year for wheat. True, and why was that? Because we had had *four* fine harvests in succession; so fine that the importation of wheat, on an average of five years ending with 1835, had been only 398,000 quarters a-year. *Now* one fine harvest and the importation have done the whole. But we are indebted to the Free-Traders for so often reminding us of the low prices of 1835. They demonstrate that the nation in good seasons can feed itself in the most affluent degree. Foreign importation, therefore, except in bad years, is unnecessary; and all the destruction of domestic industry it produces is as unnecessary as it is short-sighted.

Important as these considerations are, they yet yield in magnitude to the effects of Free Trade on the national Finances, as subject to which the nation, from an indistinct feeling of dread, has hitherto apparently shut its eyes. This, however, can now be no longer done. The Chancellor of the Exchequer has brought forward the Budget, and the Financial Measures of Government are before the public. It contains matter worthy of the most serious consideration. It is hard to say whether the admission it contains, or the

measures it proposes, are most condemnatory of the system of Class Government which the Reform Bill has imposed on the country.

The statement of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in a few words, is this :—" Last year, I calculated upon a small surplus of £104,000 for the year ending 5th April 1850, but that surplus has swelled to £2,250,000, by rise in the produce of the taxes, and reductions of the expenditure. Of this sum £1,500,000 is to be regarded as the real surplus to be relied upon for the measures of this year." Assuming this as the surplus to be dealt with, he proposes to apply £750,000 in reduction of the last contracted part of the debt, and £750,000 in reduction of taxation ; £400,000 a-year being applied to the reduction of the duty on bricks, and £350,000 to that of stamps on conveyances. It is thus that he proposes to alleviate the agricultural distress which, he admits, prevails in the country.

Three things are especially worthy of observation in this statement.

In the first place, it affords another illustration, if another was needed, of the present deplorable subjection of Government to the pressure from without, which has so often and painfully been exhibited since the new system of government began. It is well known that, during the three disastrous years that preceded the present one, debt to a large amount was contracted. To mention two items only : eight millions were borrowed in 1847 to relieve the Irish famine; £2,000,000 in the succeeding year, to carry on the current expenses of the year ; and in 1841 the deficiency had been such, that no less than £5,000,000 was borrowed to meet the ordinary expenses of the year. One would suppose, that when a surplus arose in the year 1849, the natural course would have been to have applied it, in the first instance, to extinguish, so far as it would go, the additional debt so recently contracted. Has this been done ? Not at all. Only £750,000 out of a real surplus said to amount to £1,500,000, is to be applied in this way ; and £750,000 is to be devoted to reduction of taxes. £10,000,000 is borrowed during two years of distress ; £750,000 only has been devoted to its reduction, in a year, we are told, of unparalleled commercial prosperity.

In the next place, to what object is the £750,000 a-year of surplus available to reduced taxation, discovered for the first time after three years of deficit, to be applied? Is it to be devoted to remission of taxes pressing upon the agricultural interest, which the measures pursued for behoof of towns have reduced to such a state of depression? Not at all. It is to be applied to reduction of the duty on *stamps and bricks*. The first may be admitted to be desirable, because, as so large a portion of the landed property in the kingdom will soon, to all appearance, change hands, it is an object to render the transfer as little costly as possible. But of what use is the reduction of the duty on bricks to the suffering cultivators? That it is a boon to the master-builders in towns may be conceded; though it may well be doubted whether it will ever cause a reduction of price to the purchasers from them. But what the better will the farmers and ploughmen, the landlords and yeomen, be of the change? Additional houses are not wanted *in the country;* on the contrary, there will in all probability not be inmates for those that are already there, from the certain and experienced effect of Free Trade in diminishing the demand for rural labour. It is in the towns and villages that the building is going on; because Free-Trade policy is daily more and more forcing the rural inhabitants into the towns in quest of employment or relief. In London, 200 miles of new streets, and 66,000 houses, are said to have been constructed, or to be in course of construction, during the last two years. Is there any increase of houses in the rural districts? Herein, then, lies the injustice of the present measures of Government, that, though prefaced with professions of a desire to relieve all parties, they in reality benefit one class only; and that, introduced at a time when it is admitted the agriculturists are in a state of extreme depression, and the manufacturers are asserted to be in one of unexampled prosperity, they are mainly calculated to add to the prosperity of the latter, and take nothing from the sufferings of the former. It is not difficult to see where the Reform Bill has practically lodged the power of Government in the British empire.

In the third place, and what is most material of all, the speech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer contains an

admission in regard to the present state and past direction of our finances, since we have fallen under Liberal direction, of such moment, that we regard it as the most important statement that has ever yet been given in regard to the effect of the new measures on the national fortunes. It must be given in his own words, as reported in the *Times* of March 16 :—

"If honourable gentlemen will refer to what has taken place during the last twenty years—the sums which have been borrowed on the one hand, and the amounts which have been applied to the reduction of the debt on the other—I think they will see that there is good reason for not being indifferent on this subject. In 1835 and 1836 a sum of £20,000,000 was borrowed for the emancipation of the West Indian slave population; to defray the deficiency, in the year 1841, £5,000,000 were borrowed; I was obliged to borrow £8,000,000 to meet the necessities of the sister country in 1847; and when the House refused to increase the income-tax in 1848, I was obliged to borrow a further sum of £2,000,000, to meet the extraordinary expenditure. Since the period I have mentioned, then, a sum of £35,000,000 has been added to the national debt. When I turn to the other side of the account, I find that all the money which has been applied from surplus income to the reduction of debt, in the course of the last twenty years, amounts to only £8,000,000; so that, *in a period of profound peace, an increase of debt of no less than* £27,000,000 *has taken place.* (Hear, hear.) When, in 1848, the House refused to accede to the proposal I made for an increased tax upon income, I certainly did hope that, when a turn took place in our financial affairs, they would not, the moment there was a surplus of income, instantly press that the whole of that surplus should be devoted to the reduction of taxation. What should we think of a private individual who acted in such a manner—(hear, hear)—a man who, whenever he found his income fall short of his expenditure, borrowed the money necessary to meet his liabilities, but who never thought of paying off that debt when, by a fortunate turn of affairs, he happened to be in receipt of an excess of income? (Hear, hear.) I must say that it will be hopeless for us to maintain that character as a nation which we think indispensable in an individual, if, in a time of profound peace, instead of reducing our public debt, we go on adding to it from year to year."

Here it is admitted, by the Whig Chancellor of the Exchequer, that after twenty years of profound peace and unbroken Liberal government, (Sir Robert Peel was essentially Liberal,) not only has there been no reduction of the public debt, but AN INCREASE OF IT TO THE EXTENT OF TWENTY-SEVEN MILLIONS. It has been repeatedly demonstrated that, if the noble sinking fund of £15,000,000 a-year, which Mr Pitt's policy left to the Administration at the close of the war in 1815, had been preserved unimpaired by keeping up the indirect taxes from which it arose, the whole national debt would have been extinguished in 1845. When the ruinous monetary act of 1819, and the increasing con-

cession of successive Administrations to urban clamour, had rendered that impossible, the semi-Liberal semi-Tory Governments from 1815 to 1830 still contrived to pay off £82,000,000 of the public debt in fifteen years; and when the Duke of Wellington resigned in November 1830, he left, by the admission of all parties, a real sinking-fund, arising from an excess of income above expenditure, of £2,900,000 a-year to his successors. But since that time, under his Liberal successors, not only has that surplus on an average of years disappeared, but, during twenty years of profound peace, £27,000,000 has been *added* to the total amount of the debt. Well may Sir Charles Wood say, "What should we think of a private individual who acted in such a manner?" Such is the rule of the urban constituencies, to humour whose fancies, and appease whose clamour, the whole efforts of Government for the last twenty years have been directed.

The important thing in the statement of the Chancellor of the Exchequer is, that it gives us the result of Whig government and Free-Trade finance during so long a period. Every successive quarter, during these twenty years, we have been told by the Liberal press that the finances were in the most flourishing condition; that any deficiency that appeared was more apparent than real; and at any rate, in the most unfavourable view, it was sufficiently explained by temporary causes, and afforded no ground whatever for despondency in the future. Every session, the Ministers came down to Parliament with the most flourishing accounts of the state of the country and of the public finances, and demonstrated to the satisfaction, as they hoped, of every reasonable man in the nation that both never were in more hopeful and prosperous circumstances. Even when a deficiency of one or two millions stared the Chancellor of the Exchequer in the face, which was not unfrequently the case, there was always some temporary or transient cause to which it was to be referred. The China tribute had ceased, or some reduction of duties had come into operation, or revolutions in Europe had diminished our exports to the adjoining states. The Irish potato-rot was a perfect godsend to the Liberal financiers. It constituted their stock in trade for the next three years. The ruin of £15,000,000 worth of agricultural pro-

duce in Ireland, out of at least £260,000,000 worth in the two islands, explained the whole distress of the country and the exchequer for the next three years; and, strange to say, the very men who paraded so ostentatiously the ruinous effects of this comparatively trifling deficiency in a single year, made a boast soon after of their having destroyed £90,000,000 of agricultural remuneration by the importations they induced of foreign grain.

But nothing is more certain than that error and delusion cannot, by any human effort, be prolonged for a very long period. With the advent of the time when the interest to deceive has ceased, or a new generation of deceivers has succeeded, the whole fabric falls to pieces. As certainly and mercilessly as the vices or follies of preceding monarchs are portrayed by those who have succeeded to the inheritance of their results, are the ruinous consequences of former delusions in democratic governments exposed to succeeding administrations, who find themselves hampered by their effects. Many a popular Nero is cast down from his pedestal almost before the vital warmth has left his body; many a republican Necker is exposed by a republican Bailly, when he finds the public finances rendered desperate by the measures which had been pursued with the cordial approbation of the whole Liberal party in the state. It is the same with our present Chancellor of the Exchequer. He finds the public finances, in the midst of boasted commercial and manufacturing prosperity, in so deplorable a condition, that he is fain to lay the whole blame upon his predecessors, Whigs though they were; and after deploring the extraordinary fact, that during twenty years of profound peace, Liberal government, and retrenching administrations, we have not only made no reductions whatever in the public debt, but added £27,000,000 to its amount, he very naturally and justly observes, "What should we say to a private individual who should conduct his affairs in this manner?"

We have been so accustomed, during twenty years of Liberal and popular rule, to see every successive Administration live only from hand to mouth, and to be content if they can get over present difficulties without bestowing a thought on the future, that the nation has almost forgotten

what it was to have a prudent and foreseeing Government at the head of affairs; or rather, nearly the whole generation which has risen to manhood during their rule has come to think that such a system of government is impossible, and is to be ranked with the El Dorado of Sir Walter Raleigh, or the Utopia of Sir Thomas More. To enlighten their minds on this subject, we subjoin two Tables, showing what was done by the corrupt old Tory Governments—even during the anxieties and expenditure of a most protracted and costly war, or when the national finances were slowly recovering from its effects—to put the finances on a good footing, and lay, in present fortitude and sacrifice, a solid foundation for future relief and prosperity.

TABLE I., showing the growth of the Money applied to the reduction of the Debt, and the Sums paid off from 1792 to 1815, being twenty-three years of war.

1792,	£1,558,504
1793,	1,634,972
1794,	1,872,957
1795,	2,143,697
1796,	2,639,956
1797,	3,393,210
1798,	4,093,164
1799,	4,528,568
1800,	4,908,379
1801,	5,528,315
1802,	6,114,033
1803,	6,494,694
1804,	6,436,929
1805,	9,406,865
1806,	9,602,658
1807,	10,125,419
1808,	10,681,579
1809,	11,359,691
1810,	12,095,977
1811,	13,073,577
1812,	14,098,842
1813,	16,064,057
1814,	14,830,957
1815,	14,241,397
	£186,928,399

—PORTER'S *Parl. Tables*, i. 1.

It is a total mistake to allege, as is often done, that this immense and growing sinking-fund was obtained entirely by borrowing with the one hand what was paid off with another. The *funds* thus applied to the reduction of debt were obtained from the *indirect* taxes set apart on the contraction of each loan, in amount adequate not only to defray its

annual interest, but also to extinguish, within forty-five years after it was contracted, the principal of the loan itself. That part of the loan was applied in each year, especially during the latter years of the war, to keep up the sinking-fund, is true, but is immaterial. That was only because the taxes set apart for its support were absorbed, in great part, by the necessities of the contest; and when *the contest and loans ceased*, these taxes were amply sufficient to keep up the sinking-fund without any extraneous aid. This appears from the following Table, also taken from Mr Porter, exhibiting what was actually paid off of the public debt during the next fifteen years of Tory peace-government, when the annual contraction of loans had ceased, and the real working of Mr Pitt's sinking-fund appeared in comparatively undiminished lustre, although it was progressively encroached upon by successive Administrations during the whole of that period:—

TABLE showing the Money applied to the reduction of Debt, Funded and Unfunded, from 1815 to 1832.

1816,	£13,945,117
1817,	14,514,457
1818,	15,339,483
1819,	16,305,590
1820,	17,499,773
1821,	17,219,957
1822,	18,889,319
1823,	7,482,325
1824,	10,625,059
1825,	6,093,475
1826,	5,621,231
1827,	5,704,766
1828,	4,667,965
1829,	2,559,485
1830,	4,545,465
1831,	1,663,093
1832,	5,696
	£162,682,256

—PORTER'S *Parl. Tables*, i. 1.

But the Reform Bill, passed in 1832, has entirely put an end to the reduction of the debt, because it has confirmed and rendered perpetual the system of applying every surplus that arises in the hands of the Chancellor of the Exchequer to the remission of indirect taxes. Since that time, as Sir Charles Wood tells us, the debt, so far from having diminished, has increased £27,000,000.

That there was a substantial reduction of debt going on

during the period included in the above table, and not a mere juggle, by transferring debt from one denomination to another, though not to the amount which these figures would indicate, is decisively proved by the following table, showing the general result of the financial operations from 1816 to 1832, when the Whigs introduced the Reform Bill :—

Funded Debt on 5th January 1816,			£816,311,940
Unfunded do.,			48,510,501
Total,			£860,822,441
Total Debt on 5th January 1832—			
Funded,	£754,100,549		
Unfunded,	27,752,650		
		781,853,199	
Paid off in sixteen years,			£82,969,242

—PORTER'S *Parl. Tables*, ii. 6.

In the next eighteen years, since the Reform Bill changed the Constitution, it has been seen the debt was increased by £27,000,000.

So prodigious and fatal a change in our financial system would be wholly inexplicable, considering the many able and patriotic men who, since that period, have been intrusted with its direction, if we did not recollect the vital change made since that time in the constitution of the country, and the new class which was brought up in overwhelming numbers to return representatives to the House of Commons. That class is the burgh and shop-keeping interest, with whom the main object is to buy cheap and sell dear. Not only has this principle, since that time, formed the sole regulator of Government measures in general or commercial policy, but it has operated decisively on our finances, and is the main cause to which their present hopeless condition is to be ascribed. To cheapen everything became the great object; and this was to be done, as was thought, most effectually by taking taxes off articles of consumption. Under the influence of this principle, indirect taxes to the following enormous amount have been repealed since the peace, the magnitude of which renders it noways surprising that the sinking-fund has disappeared :—

TABLE showing the Taxes, Direct and Indirect, Repealed and Imposed from 1816 to 1847, both inclusive.

	REPEALED.		IMPOSED.		
Year.	Direct.	Indirect.	Direct.	Indirect.	Year.
1816,	£15,000,000	£2,547,000	...	£320,018	1816
1817,	...	36,495	...	7,991	1817
1818,	...	9,564	...	1,336	1818
1819,	...	705,846	...	3,094,902	1819
1820,	...	4,000	...	119,602	1820
1821,	...	471,309	...	43,642	1821
1822,	...	2,139,101	...	...	1822
1823,	1,860,000	2,190,050	...	18,596	1823
1824,	...	1,704,724	...	45,605	1824
1825,	...	3,639,551	...	43,000	1825
1826,	...	1,973,812	...	188,000	1826
1827,	...	4,038	...	21,402	1827
1828,	...	51,998	...	1,966	1828
1829,	...	126,406	...	...	1829
1830,	...	4,093,955	...	696,004	1830
1831,	...	1,598,536	...	627,586	1831
1832,	...	747,264	...	44,526	1832
1833,	...	1,526,914	...	...	1833
1834,	1,200,000	891,516	...	198,394	1834
1835,	...	165,817	...	75	1835
1836,	...	989 786	...	...	1836
1837,	...	234	...	3,991	1837
1838,	...	289	...	100	1838
1839,	...	66,258	...	1,783	1839
1840,	...	18,959	...	2,155,673	1840
1841,	...	27,176	...	...	1841
1842,	...	1,596,366	5,529,989	...	1842
1843,	...	...	...	...	1843
1844,	...	...	...	...	1844
1845,	...	4,535,561	...	23,720	1845
1846,	...	...	...	...	1846
1847,	...	...	...	...	1847
	£18,060,000	£33,523,623	£5,529,989	£7,743,962	
Imposed,	5,529,989	7,743,962			
Taxation reduced,	£12,431,011	£25,779,661			

Thus the balance of indirect taxation, reduced since the peace, has been above £25,000,000—of direct, above £12,000,000 annually; and till 1842, it was £15,000,000 yearly. Had the sinking-fund been kept up at its amount as it was in 1815—that is, at £15,000,000 sterling—out of the indirect taxes, there might have been repealed £15,000,000 of direct, and £14,000,000 of indirect taxes, and still *every shilling of the public debt would have been paid off by* 1846. Why has this most desirable, indeed vital object for the national safety in future times, not been gained? Simply because the mania of cheapening everything has ruled the State. Successive Administrations, which have succeeded to the helm of affairs, have

endeavoured to gain a fleeting popularity, by bidding against each other in the race for popularity, by the sacrifice of the best interests of their country, and the entire abandonment of all thought even of liquidating the public debt; and because Parliament—composed, so far as its majority goes since 1832, of the members for burghs—has shut its eyes entirely to the ultimate consequences of its actions, and looked only to the gratifying the buying and selling constituents of the majority of its members, by the incessant reduction of the indirect taxes, and lowering the remuneration of industry of every kind throughout the country.

In truth, the chasm made in the finances of the country by this incessant, uncalled-for, and ruinous reduction of the indirect taxes, in pursuance of the mania to cheapen everything, under which the nation has been labouring during the last thirty years, has been far greater and more disastrous than the preceding figures, formidable as they are, would lead us to suppose. The taxes repealed are of course set down at the amount they were *at the time of their repeal.* But that is very far from what they would have produced if they had been kept up; because, in that case, of course they would have shared in the vast increase of wealth and population which has since taken place. At the time when a large part of these taxes were repealed, the British isles did not contain above from 20,000,000 to 24,000,000 of inhabitants—now they contain 29,000,000. Our exports and imports have more than doubled in amount since the income-tax was taken off in 1816. Beyond all doubt, at its original rate of ten per cent, it would now have produced, at the very least, £20,000,000 a-year. The duty on spirits, so fatally lowered in 1826, would now have produced, not £2,000,000, but £3,000,000 or £3,500,000 annually. There cannot be a shadow of doubt that the taxes, which in 1815 produced £72,000,000 a-year, would, if continued at the same rates, have been now producing fifty per cent more, or £110,000,000. There is no man in his senses who would think that the nation either could have borne, or ought to have borne, such a load of taxation, Relief, on the return of peace, was indispensable. But it is one thing to give relief in a reasonable and prudent degree; it is another, and a very

different thing, to throw away the public revenue with a reckless prodigality, without either principle or foresight, and for no other reason but to gratify separate and clamorous urban interests, or win a temporary popularity for Administrations which, with culpable haste, were sacrificing the lasting interests of the country.

Indeed, the inevitable effect of the cheapening system, and especially of the repeal of the Corn Laws, in rendering the taxes unproductive, and payment of the interest even of the public debt ere long impossible, was distinctly foreseen and foretold, not only by ourselves in this Magazine, but by the most decided apostles of the opposite set of opinions. Hear Mr Cobbett on the subject, in vol. li. of his *Register*, No. 2, July 10, 1824.

"'The commercial world' will, I believe, find it rather difficult to persuade the landlords to 'modify and alter the corn laws,' much less to 'do away' with those laws: but what now is to become of all the pretty doctrine about the inseparable interests of manufacture and agriculture? I trust we shall hear no more of that soft nonsense. . . . .

"Now, mind I do not say that the manufacturers ought not to be permitted to get food from abroad; but I say—and what man in his senses does not say, that, in whatever degree this cotton body is supplied with food from abroad, *it must and will dispense with food from our own lands.* . . . .

"I would fain then see the two-legged animal who is quadruped enough still to contend that the interests of the landlords and those of the cotton-lords are inseparable. They are directly opposed to each other; and opposed to each other they must be as long as this debt shall last.

"It will be curious enough to observe how 'the manufacturing mind' will work upon 'the agricultural mind.' These two minds will now come into direct contact with each other. It will be the business of the cotton mind to convince the landlords that bringing in foreign corn will not make their English corn sell cheaper; or, failing in this, to convince them that wheat at 4s. a bushel will, 'in the long run,' be better for the landlords than wheat at 8s. a bushel. A very long run, I believe, indeed! In short, it is a question of rents or no rents. With the present debt and taxes, and with wheat at 4s. a bushel, there can be no rents; so that, *when the cotton mind comes forward to get a repeal of the Corn Bill, it comes in fact to pray that there shall no longer be rents in England.*

"The cotton-lords, and indeed all the lords of the loom and anvil, are bestirring themselves, and collecting all their forces for a desperate assault upon the jolterheads (the landlords) who cry aloud for national faith. I wish them success. I will not absolutely join them; but I wish them success; because that success would destroy the *whole system* (the system of paper-money, national debt, and oppressive taxation) root and branch. The Corn Bill, the Small-Note Bill, the laying out of public money in Ireland, the lending of money occasionally to manufacturers and merchants, the Bank advancing money upon big estates—all these shifts and tricks just keep the thing agoing; but come a war, or repeal the Corn Bill, and you will soon see what is to become of the system. Everything seems strained to its utmost: and when that is the case, something must soon give way."

The alleged advantage which the Free-Trade party oppose to the obviously calamitous effects of this incessant surrender of the public revenue, and the now admitted abandonment of all attempts to pay off the public debt, is, that commodities have been cheapened thereby, and the weight which oppressed them taken off the springs of industry. We utterly deny this advantage. What is the good of this constant cheapening, when confessedly you cannot cheapen our debts and obligations? Is it anything else but diminishing the funds from which the interest of these debts and obligations is to be discharged, and running the nation into the most imminent hazard of incurring a general bankruptcy, public and private? Do not salaries and incomes fall, from the highest to the lowest, in consequence; and if so, what good does the fall of prices do, even to the individuals who apparently profit by it? Suppose we gained our object, and rendered everything as cheap here as it is in Poland or Norway—what should we gain by it, but that we should speedily become *as poor as them*, and that the realised wealth of this nation, now for the most part invested in situations where its interest is paid by the industry of the people, would be lost by that industry having ceased to receive a sufficient remuneration? And is that an object for which the national security should be endangered, and the means of maintaining our independence destroyed?

In truth—with the exception of manufactured articles, such as cotton and calicoes, in which the fall of prices has been prodigious, owing to the successive improvement of the machinery employed in their formation—we are at a loss to see that this immense remission of indirect taxes, which has evidently been fatal to the national finances, has been attended with the slightest benefit to the country generally. We say the country generally—because there can be no doubt that it has been a very great advantage to the *master-manufacturers engaged in the trades affected by the taxes*, who have, in most cases, contrived to put the whole tax lost to the public into their own pockets. That is the real secret of the remission. Individual selfishness, the thirst for gain, was in most cases the moving spring. The parties interested besieged the Chancellor of the Exchequer with memorials, setting forth the hardships they sus-

tained from the tax affecting their branch of industry, and the immense benefit the *public* would derive from its abolition; but the public was the very last thing they were really thinking of. It was their own profits to which they were looking; and but for that, they never would have stirred in the matter. The immense fortunes made in many branches of manufactures during the last quarter of a century, have been in great part owing to the tax remitted having been wholly gained to the master-manufacturers engaged in them. We pay the same now for our shoes and beer as we did thirty years ago, though, since its termination, the whole tax on leather and the war tax on malt have been repealed.

There is no doubt that prices have declined in most articles of consumption to a great degree during the last twenty-five years, and in some to a most extraordinary extent. But where the decline has been great—as, for example, in cottons or calicoes, which are now selling for a fifth of what they cost during the war—it is not owing to the remission of taxation, so much as to the extraordinary perfection to which machinery and the division of labour have been brought. The proof of this is decisive. The fall of price has been fully as great in branches of manufactures in regard to which no remission of duty has taken place, or in a very slight degree, as in those in which it has been most considerable. And in regard to all commodities, the effect of the monetary bills of 1819, 1826, and 1844, must be taken into consideration. Those bills, by contracting the currency to *one half* of what it previously had been in proportion to the industry and population of the country, have effected a revolution of prices so great, that nearly the whole reduction of the cost of articles prior to the last year is to be ascribed to it. The great organ of the money interest, the *Times*, boasts that recent legislation has doubled the value of the sovereign. Unquestionably it has; and of course it has also doubled the whole debt of the country, public and private, and halved, from that cause alone, the permanent price of every article of industry raised within its bounds. It has turned the national debt of £800,000,000 into £1,600,000,000; it has made the annual taxation of £52,000,000 as burdensome as £100,000,000 would have

been during the war. Prices have generally fallen; but it is the contraction of the currency which has done that. As to the diminution of taxation, with the exception of a few articles, such as salt and spirits, in which the remission, being very large, was immediately felt by the consumer, the reduction of prices has not been greater than necessarily flowed from the artificial scarcity of money, and would have been the same though no reduction of public duties had taken place. Generally speaking, the tax, lost to the public, has been entirely gained by the master-manufacturer, and the boasted reduction of price has been really owing to the contraction of the currency which was simultaneously going forward.

Had the system of cheapening, carried into effect by the contraction of the currency on the one hand, and the extensive remission on duties on the other, been attended by beneficial consequences to the people, and resulted in general happiness and prosperity, there would at least have been some set-off against the ruin of our financial prospects which it has occasioned; and we might have consoled ourselves for the evident imposition of the public debt as a hopeless burden upon the nation, by the reflection that at least temporary wellbeing had resulted from the change. Has this been the case? Alas! the fact is just the reverse; and among the many mournful reflections which the present woful condition of our finances awakens, it is perhaps the most mournful, that the price paid for it has been, not public happiness, but general and unprecedented misery. In the long and varied annals of English history, there is beyond all question no period which has been marked by such repeated and widespread suffering as the thirty years which have elapsed since the cheapening system was begun, by the contraction of the currency in 1819, and the present time, when it has been carried into full effect by Sir R. Peel's Free-Trade policy in 1846. The three dreadful monetary crises of 1825, 1839, and 1847, which were entirely owing to the new monetary system, followed, as each of them was, by several years of devastation and ruin to the trading classes; the repeated recurrence of agricultural distress, especially from 1832 to 1836, and in 1849; the unheard-of agonies of the Irish famine of 1846, perpetuated by the fall of prices, consequent on free trade in corn, which rendered

agriculture unremunerative over great part of that country,—are some of the leading features of an epoch which will ever be regarded as at once the most momentous and the most disastrous which the British empire has ever known.

The policy of that period has left its traces deeply furrowed and for ever marked in English annals. It has been attended by consequences which will never be forgotten, and to which the historians of future times will refer as the turning-point of British story, an eternal warning to future ages. It has produced the Revolution of 1832; disfranchised our whole Colonies; displaced the government of property, talent, and intelligence in the ruling island, and installed that of buying and selling in its stead. It has severed the public policy from the protection of the Land and Native Industry, the real inheritance and only sure patrimony of the nation, and anchored it instead on the shifting quicksands of Commerce. It has destroyed the West Indies beyond the possibility of redemption, and spread discontent so widely through our other Colonies, that it is universally known they are all only waiting for some serious disaster to the parent state, or the advent of a protracted and hazardous war, to declare themselves independent. It has rendered every seventh man in Great Britain and Ireland, taken together, a pauper. It has driven from 250,000 to 300,000 industrious citizens, for the last three years, annually into exile from their native land. It has raised the poor-rate in both islands to an unprecedented height, and, when measured by its true standard, the price of subsistence, to *fifty per cent* above what it ever was before. It has implanted the seeds of ruin in our Mercantile Navy, by the rapid growth of foreign shipping as compared with British in carrying on our own trade. It has rendered our shores defenceless as they were in the days of the Saxon Heptarchy; and made one of our first admirals, Sir Charles Napier, thankful when the winter frosts closed the Baltic harbours, and secured our capital from the insulting visits of the successors of the sea-kings of the north. It has rendered our means of raising a revenue so hopeless, that the "greatest bill-broker in the world," Mr Gurney, has declared that we must end in national bankruptcy; and

made the greatest general in the world, the Duke of Wellington, say, he prayed to God he might die before he witnessed the disgrace of his now defenceless country. Even the leader of the Free-Traders himself, Mr Cobden, has publicly said that such is the state of our finances, there is no resource but to disband our troops, sell our ships of war, and trust the national security to the justice and moderation of our enemies, and the total absence of envy in our rivals. Such, and not even public and passing felicity, is the price which the nation has paid for the ruin of its finances, the abandonment of the sinking fund, and the imposing of the public debt *for ever* as a burden hopeless of redemption, on the country.

The destruction of property which has taken place in the British empire during the thirty years that this cheapening process was going on, exceeds probably anything recorded during a similar period in the annals of mankind. It has much exceeded all that was produced by the confiscations of the Convention, or the devastation of the wars of Napoleon. Each of the three great monetary crises of 1825, 1839, and 1847, occasioned the destruction at once of two or three hundred millions' worth of mercantile property, and halved the fortunes of vast numbers more who withstood the shock. The intervals between them were, with the exception of a few brief gleams of perilous prosperity, periods of anxiety, gloom, and depression, during which all persons engaged in business, with the exception of the great capitalists, who were daily getting richer, found their property melting away under the ceaseless and progressive fall of prices. It was exactly the obverse of the vast impulse given to industry over the whole world by the discovery of the mines of Mexico and Peru, and the consequent rise of prices which everywhere ensued. One class, and one only, flourished amidst the general distress; but, unfortunately, in that class the government of the nation for the time was vested—viz., the *moneyed interest.* So immensely had this interest grown under the protective policy of the preceding hundred and fifty years, that it was able to set all other interests in the State at defiance, and to pursue the system of making the sovereign worth two sovereigns, despite the evident ruin which that system was

bringing on all the industrious classes in the state. Future ages will ask what were the devastating wars, the stunning calamities, the loss of provinces, the severance of colonies, which inflicted such deep and irremediable wounds on the British nation during these memorable periods? and they will be answered, it was thirty years of unbroken peace at home, a series of brilliant colonial conquests abroad, and ONE SYSTEM.

But that one system was amply sufficient to break down the most wisely-conceived system of finance, to ruin the most flourishing revenue, to render beggarly the richest nation, to destroy the greatest empire. It is the system, originating in the Roman empire, as a necessary and just consequence of its universal conquest, of universal free trade—a system which ruined that noble empire. It is the more dangerous that it recommends itself to the people in the first instance by the alluring prospect of a general fall in prices, of making money daily go farther, rendering every one apparently richer and more comfortable than he was before. It is readily adopted by the shopkeeping and trading class, because it enables them, in the first instance, to purchase the goods at a less cost, and begets the hope that they will in consequence sell more extensively, forgetting that if they buy cheap they must also sell cheap, and that their customers' means of payment are melting away from the effects of that very cheapness. It is long, however, before this truth, how obvious soever, is generally understood. It is by slow degrees, and after much suffering only, that it is discovered that this system of general cheapening does not stop short with people's *expenditure;* that it speedily comes to affect their *incomes* also, and that in a still greater degree; that, if shopkeepers buy cheap, they must sell little or sell cheap also; that wages must fall with the decline in the price of commodities, and their customers' means of purchasing diminish with their decline; and that the last condition of the people, as a necessary consequence, is worse than the first. But while this great and eternal truth is in the course of being brought home to the nation by suffering, the national pre-eminence is lost, the national security is endangered, the national spirit is weakened. Multitudes become

desperate in regard to their own and their country's fortunes, from the scenes of suffering and distress which they perpetually see around them; the selfish feelings acquire a fatal preponderance, from the general experienced impossibility of indulging in the generous. Meanwhile the national income melts away under the effects of the general cheapening of the remuneration of industry—all steady or foreseeing system of finance is abandoned, and every successive Government, like a needy spendthrift, deems itself happy if it can get through the year without a financial crisis, never bestowing a thought on the future, either as regards the national security, its finances, or its means of defence.

One memorable instance of the way in which, under the cheapening system, the public revenue has been recklessly and needlessly thrown away, is to be found in the Penny Postage. It is well known that, prior to the change, the post-office income, after paying *the whole charges of the packet service*, yielded a clear surplus revenue to the nation of £1,500,000 or £1,600,000 a-year. The postage of letters, however, was decidedly too high; a reduction was loudly called for by the public; and, if cautiously and judiciously applied, the increase of letters might have compensated the reduction of rates of postage, and a boon have been conceded to the community, without any detriment to the public service. A uniform 2d., or 3d., or even 4d. postage, would have been hailed with unmixed satisfaction by the people, who had been paying 10d. or 1s. for their letters, and no material diminution of that important branch of the revenue experienced. Instead of this, what did the Government, urged on by the cheapening party, actually do? Why, they reduced the postage at once to a penny for all letters, from all distances within the two islands. We were told, that not only would there be no loss, but a certain gain, after a few years had elapsed, from the vast and certain increase in the number of letters that would be transmitted. How have these expectations been realised? The revenue set down as coming from the Post-Office, immediately after the change, was only £500,000 or £600,000 a-year; and, after having been nine years in operation, it has only risen, in the year ending 5th April

1850, to £803,000 ; much less than half of what it would have been under the former system, when the increased population and transactions of the country are taken into consideration, if either the old rates had been continued, or a reasonable reduction to 2d. or 3d. had taken place. It is to the embarrassment produced by this great defalcation that we are mainly indebted for the renewal of the income-tax.

But this defalcation, great and serious as it thus appears on the face of the public accounts, was little more than *a half* of what really occurred in consequence of the change. To conceal the effects of this great innovation, the Free-Trade party, who had now got entire possession of the Government, had the address both to get the expense of the Packet Service, *previously borne by the Post-Office, thrown upon the Navy*, and to keep that important change a secret among the Government officials. In this way a double object was gained. The disastrous effect of the reduction was kept out of view, and the increased charges of the Navy afforded a plausible ground for demagogues to assail the Government for alleged extravagance in that department. But that which one demagogue had done, another demagogue brought to light. Mr Cobden made so violent a clamour about the increase of expenditure in the Navy since 1835, when it had been reduced, under the pressure of the Reform mania, to its lowest point, that the Admiralty, in its own defence, let out the important fact, that, since the penny-postage system began, the navy estimates had been saddled with the whole cost of the Packet Service, which they never had been before ; and, in the debate on the estimates, Lord John Russell stated that this cost now amounted to £737,000 a-year. Thus the real Post-Office accounts stand thus :—

Apparent surplus for year ending 5th April 1850, . .	£803,000
Deduct cost of Packet Service, thrown on Navy, . .	737,000
Real Post-office revenue, ...	£66,000

And it has been raised to this level only during a year of extraordinary manufacturing activity, which is boasted of as one when our exports turned £60,000,000. We know the expense of the Packet Service has greatly increased within the last ten years ; but be it recollected that it is all borne by the Navy, while the *undiminished postage to*

the colonies goes to the Post-Office, and swells the apparent amount of the penny post receipts. On the whole, since the postage was reduced in 1841, the Post-Office has not yielded a farthing to the country, but, on the contrary, has occasioned a loss of some hundred thousand pounds.

We have heard enough from the Free-Traders of the disasters which accumulated on the years 1847 and 1848, when a monetary crisis, the Irish famine, the European revolution, the Irish rebellion, and the Chartist sedition, combined to reduce the revenue to an unprecedented degree. We have heard enough, also, of the alleged unexampled prosperity of the year 1849, when these extraneous disasters had ceased, and the blessings of Free Trade and the cheapening system were still in undiminished lustre. Be it so. Let us compare the public revenue of that year of unprecedented disaster with that obtained in the next year of unexampled prosperity, as appearing from the finance accounts of April 5, 1850 :—

	Year ending 5th April 1849.	Year ending 5th April 1850.
Ordinary revenue, . . .	£48,490,002	£48,643,042
China money, ...	84,284	... ...
Imprest and other monies, .	665,293	656,855
Repayment of advances, . .	427,761	553,349
	£49,667,430	49,853,246
	49,853,246	
Increase in 1849,	185,816	

—*Times*, April 1850.

So that the increase in a year of extraordinary and unprecedented prosperity, as we are told, over one of unexampled and overwhelming suffering, *is only* £185,000, for £128,000 of which we are indebted to an excess in the repayment of advances in 1849 over 1848. We care not to what this extraordinary fact is to be ascribed, whether reduction of duties, the continuance of distress, or any other cause. We rest on the act that Free-Trade finance and the cheapening system have brought the revenue of the country, *in a year of what the Free-Traders call its highest prosperity, to a level with what it had been in a year of its greatest adversity.* History cannot, and will not, overlook these facts. The leaders of the Free-Traders say they live for posthumous fame. Let them not be afraid. Posterity will do them full justice. The financial problem of the

Free-Traders is—"Given a cheapened nation, to extract an adequate revenue out of its unremunerated industry." We recommend this problem to the study of the Free-Trade Chancellor of the Exchequer. If he solve it, we shall assign him a place superior to Archimedes in physical, to Bacon in political science.

It will appear the most extraordinary of all phenomena to future ages, that a nation which has, like the British, successfully resisted the attacks of external enemies, and incessantly grown and prospered, though with occasional disaster, during more than a thousand years—and which has, in our own recollection, repelled the attacks and overthrown the powers of the greatest coalition ever formed against a single state, directed by the most consummate ability which has appeared in modern times—should in this manner voluntarily descend from its high position, surrender its power, starve down its armaments, and drive headlong on the road to ruin, for the supposed advantage of a limited class in its bosom. But the marvel ceases when the composition of its society, and the prevailing feelings of the section of the people in whom supreme power is now vested is taken into consideration. That class is the mercantile, or rather shopkeeper class; and with them the money power is all-powerful. Three-fifths of the seats in the House of Commons, let it ever be recollected, are for boroughs; and two-thirds of the constituents of every borough are shopkeepers, or those whom they influence. This is the decisive circumstance which has changed the whole policy of England since the Reform Bill, and in its ultimate consequences is destined, to all appearance, to produce the national disasters which many of its warmest supporters now so feelingly deplore. To the modern rulers of the British nation, to the constituents of the majority of the House of Commons, to buy cheap *and to sell dear* is the great object of ambition. They have gained the first; let them see whether they will secure the last. Let them see whether, amidst the ruin of the agricultural interest, and the declining circumstances of all trades which are exposed to the effects of foreign competition, they, the *sellers* of commodities, will make their fortunes. If they do, it will be a new era in society; for it will be one in which the trading

class amass riches in consequence of the ruin of their customers.

There is no monitor, however, to nations as to individuals, like suffering. Let Free Trade, therefore, by all means have a fair trial. Let the shopkeepers see what benefit they are likely practically to gain by the ruin of their customers. They have the Government in their hands, because they have the appointment of a majority in the House of Commons. The agricultural interest, the colonies, the shipping interest, the small manufacturing interest, are to all practical purposes disfranchised. Let the trading classes, then, feel the effects of their own measures. These will be such that they *cannot* continue. Ere long, a change of policy, and probably of rulers, will be forced upon Government by the universal cry of suffering. But let them recollect that it is *their* measures which are now upon trial; that theirs will be the responsibility if they fail; and that, if the empire is dismembered and the national independence lost, theirs will be the present loss, and theirs the eternal infamy.

What a contrast to this mournful decay of the national resources, and ruin of the national strength, from the effects of a theory acted upon by the Legislature under the influence of a class majority in Parliament, would a truly catholic and national policy, protective alike to ALL interests, have afforded! An adequate but not redundant currency, cautiously administered, and relieved from the fatal liability to abstraction from a great increase of imports in any particular year, would at once have afforded free scope to national industry, and avoided the frightful vicissitudes in the demand for labour, which the opposite system of making the currency entirely dependent on the most evanescent of earthly things—gold—of necessity occasioned. The terrible monetary crises of 1825, 1839, and 1847, would have been unfelt. They would have been surmounted, as that of 1810 had been, by an extended issue of paper when the gold was for a time abstracted, without the existence of any particular danger being known to the nation. Industry, protected in every department by adequate but not oppressive fiscal duties, would have generally and steadily flourished. Periods of extravagant speculation and exorbitant wages, followed by

commercial depression and general suffering, would have been unknown. The national revenues, sustained by an adequate currency and unbroken industry, would have afforded an ample surplus to Government, both for the public service and the promotion of objects of general utility, after providing for the maintenance of the sinking-fund. Emigration, supported, so far as the destitute are concerned, by the public resources, and conducted in Government vessels, would have poured a ceaseless and prolific stream into the colonies, at once vivifying their industry, and converting the paupers of England and Ireland into consumers of our manufactures, at the rate of six or seven pounds a-head per annum. Pauperism at home, relieved in the classes where it originates, by this wise and paternal policy, would have been arrested. Crime itself would have been made to minister to the general good : the jails of Great Britain would have been converted into industrial academies for behoof of the distant parts of the empire : penal emigration, adequately diluted by a triple amount of unstained emigrants, sent out at the public expense, would have been everywhere hailed as a blessing, not resisted as a curse. The industry of the colonies, encouraged by the protective policy of the mother country, and supported by the ceaseless streams of its emigration, would have advanced with rapid strides, and afforded a rising and inexhaustible mart for domestic manufactures. The ocean would have become a British lake : the navy of England, the floating bridge which at once united and protected its distant dependencies.

Colonial discontent would have been unknown. The West Indies, Canada, and Australia, would have been the most loyal and contented, because the most flourishing and justly governed parts of the empire. The foreign trade of the world would have been to the British empire what Adam Smith justly called the most profitable of all trades, a home trade. We should have raised the raw material for all our staple branches of industry within ourselves; wool from Australia, cotton from the East and West Indies, grain from the British isles and Canada. Agriculture at home and abroad would have advanced abreast of manufactures; commerce and shipping would have risen

with the increase of their productions; the Navy, fed by an ample and protected commercial marine, and sustained at an adequate amount by a well-filled treasury, would have secured our independence, and enabled us to attend to the interests and anticipate the wants of our remotest dependencies. We should have been alike independent of foreign nations for the materials of pacific industry, and superior to them in warlike resources. Great Britain, though gray in years of renown, would have retained for centuries the vigour of youth, because she would have been continually renovated by the energy of her descendants. The paternal hall would have been constantly cheerful and happy, because it would have been always filled with children and grandchildren, or enlivened by their exploits. Amidst general prosperity and unceasing progress, the National Debt—constantly encroached on by a sustained sinking-fund—would have disappeared. Before this time it would have been all extinguished; and the taxation of the empire, reduced to £30,000,000 or £35,000,000 a-year, would have enabled us for ever to maintain the national armaments on such a scale as would have qualified us to bid defiance alike to the covert encroachments of our rivals, or the open hostilities of our enemies. Under the opposite or cheapening system, the public debt has, on the admission of its ablest supporters, been virtually doubled; the sinking-fund has, amidst general and almost constant distress, disappeared; Colonial discontent threatens the empire with dismemberment; agricultural distress will speedily render it dependent for its daily bread on its enemies ; and the maintenance of the national independence, if the present system is persisted in, has been rendered, for any length of time, impossible.

THE ROYAL PROGRESS

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Question—"What is a King?" Answer—"A monster who devours the human race." Such was a part of the catechism taught to all the children of France during the first fervour of the Revolution in 1789. "I wonder the people should die of want," said a princess during the dreadful famine of 1774; "for my part, if I was one of them, I should live on beef-steaks and porter, rather than perish." Such are the feelings with which the members of the same community, children of the same family, unhappily sometimes come to regard each other during periods of democratic excitement or mutual estrangement. Ignorance, worked on by falsehood, and misled by ambition, is the main cause of this fatal severance. Nothing removes it so effectually as bringing them together. So natural are the feelings of loyalty to the human heart, so universally do they spring up when the falsehood which has smothered them is neutralised by the evidence of the senses, that it may be considered as one of the greatest evils which can afflict society, when circumstances occur which keep sovereigns aloof from their people, and one of the greatest blessings when they can rejoin each other. Of this, a signal example occurred on the return of the royal family of France from the fatal journey to Varennes, when Barnave, who had been sent down with Petion, as one of the most vehement and stern republicans, to bring them back to Paris, was so impressed with the philanthropic benevolence of the King, and so melted by the heroic magnanimity of the Queen, that he became thenceforward one of the most faithful defenders of the royal cause. "How often," says Thiers, in recounting this

remarkable conversion, "would factions the most inveterate be reconciled, if they could meet and read each other's hearts!"

The sudden change often produced in the general mind, by the veil of ignorance and prejudice being withdrawn, which had concealed from them the real character of their rulers, is not to be ascribed merely to the lustre of royalty, or the dazzling of the public gaze by the magnificent pageants which, on such occasions, generally surround it. It arises mainly from a different cause: it is allied to the generous affections—it springs from the feelings planted by the Author of nature in the human heart, to bind society together. It is often seen most strongly when the royal pageants are the most unpretending, and the royal personages, laying aside their previous state, mingle almost without distinction, save from the superior grace of their manners, with the ordinary citizens. It is more like the irresistible gush of affection which overspreads every heart, when the members, long severed, of a once united family are reassembled; or when the prodigal returns to his father's home, only the more dear from the events which had estranged him from it.

It is sometimes said that loyalty is an instinctive principle, meant to supply the place of reason before the intellectual faculties have grown to their full strength among a people, but unnecessary, and which gradually dies out, when society, under the direction of self-government, has come to be regulated by the rational faculties. There never was a greater mistake; and every day's experience may convince us that it is not only false, but directly the reverse of the truth. The time will never come, when the aid of loyalty will not be required to bind society to its chief; and if the period should ever arrive that its generous influence is no longer felt, it may safely be concluded that the sun of national prosperity has set, and that a night of darkness and suffering is at hand. Mankind cannot be attached, save in a passing moment of fervour, to an abstract principle, or a vast community without a head, or something which may supply its want to the senses. The aid of individuals or localities is required to concentrate and keep alive the patriotic affections, where they are not centred on an individual sovereign. What the Acropolis was to Athens, the Capitol to Rome, St Mark's to Venice, that the sovereign is to a monarchical community; and so it will remain to the end of the world.

All the fervour of the Revolution could not supply in France the want of one chief, till Napoleon concentrated the loyal affections on himself. The real enemy to loyalty is not reason, but selfishness. It dies away, not under the influence of enlarged education, but under that of augmented corruption; and till that last stage of national decay has arrived, its flame will only burn the more steadily from reason adding the fuel by which it is to be fed.

If any doubt could be entertained, by a well-informed mind, of the incalculable importance of loyalty, as the chief and often the only bond which holds society together, it would be removed by two events which have occurred in our own times,—the Moscow invasion, and the steadiness of England during the mind-quake of 1848. On the first occasion, this sacred principle defeated the mightiest armament ever assembled by the powers of intellect against the liberties of mankind; on the last, it preserved unshaken and unscathed the ark of the constitution in the British islands, amidst the deluge which had shaken the thrones of almost all the other European monarchies. In these two examples, where two states in the opposite extremes of infancy and civilisation were successively rescued from the most appalling dangers, amidst the ruins of all around them, by the influence of this noble principle, we may discern the clearest proof of its lasting influence upon man, and of the incalculable blessings it is fitted to confer, not less in the most enlightened than in the most unenlightened ages of society. But for it, the social institutions of Great Britain would have been overturned on the 10th April 1848, and England, with all its education, civilisation, and habits of freedom, would have been consigned to destruction by a deluge of civilised barbarians, compared to whom, as Macaulay has well said, those that followed the standard of Attila or Alaric were humane and temperate warriors. Hence we may learn how wonderfully loyalty is *strengthened*, instead of being weakened, by the progress of knowledge and the spread of civilisation in a really free community; and what force that noble principle acquires when, to the generous enthusiasm which binds the unlettered warrior to his chief, is added the determination of freemen to defend a throne which all feel to be the keystone in the arch of the national fortunes.

It is a fortunate, perhaps it would be nearer the truth to

say a Providential circumstance, that a QUEEN, during the late eventful years, has been on the throne of the British empire. Had a king been there, still more one of unpopular manner or retired habits, when all the thrones of Europe were falling around us, the event might have been very different, and England, with all its glories, have been sunk in the bottomless pit of revolution. The feelings of loyalty to a Queen, especially if she is young and handsome, and unites the virtues to the graces of her sex, are very different from those which, under the most favourable circumstances, can be awakened in favour of a king. The natural gallantry of man, the feelings of chivalry, the respect due to the softer sex, are mingled in overwhelming proportions with the abstract passions of loyalty when a young and interesting woman, endowed with masculine energy, but adorned with feminine beauty, surrounded by the husband of her choice and the children of their love, is seen braving the risks and enduring the fatigues of a journey through lands recently convulsed by civil dissension, solely to win the love of her subjects, to heal the divisions of the great family of which she forms the head.

History affords numerous examples of the far greater power, in periods of intestine troubles, queens have than kings in winning the affections or calming the exasperation of their subjects. Despite all her errors, notwithstanding her faults, Queen Mary exercised a sway over a large part of her subjects which no man in similar circumstances could have done. Austria would have been crushed by the arms of France and Bavaria in 1744, but for the chivalrous loyalty which led the Hungarian nobles to exclaim in a transport of generous enthusiasm, "Moriamur pro *Rege* nostro, Maria Theresa!"

> "Fair Austria spreads her mournful charms,
> The Queen, the beauty, sets the world in arms."

And it is doubtful if all the fervour of the Reformation could have enabled England to withstand the assault of the Catholic league, headed by Spain in the time of Philip II., if in defence of the nation had not been joined the chivalrous loyalty of a gallant nobility to their Queen, as well as the stern resolution of a Protestant people in behalf of their religion and their liberties.

But the passion of loyalty, as all other passions, requires aliment for its support. Like love, it can live on wonder-

fully little hope, but it absolutely requires some. A look, a smile, a word from a sovereign, doubtless go a great way ; but entire and long-continued absence will chill even the warmest affections. It is on this account that Royal Progresses have so important an influence in knitting together the bonds which unite a people to their sovereign. They have one inestimable effect—they make them known to each other. The one sees in person the enthusiastic affection with which the sovereign is regarded by the people, the latter the parental interest with which the people are regarded by their sovereign. Prejudices, perhaps nourished by faction or fostered by party, melt away before the simple light of truth. A few hours of mutual intercourse dispels the alienation which years of separation, and the continued efforts of guilty ambition during a generation, may have produced. The generous affections spring up unbidden, when the evidence of the senses dispels the load of falsehood by which they had been restrained. Mutual knowledge produces mutual interest ; and the chances of success to subsequent efforts to bring about an estrangement are materially lessened, by the discovery of how wide had been the misapprehension which had formerly existed, and how deep the mutual affection which really dwelt in the recesses of the heart, and was now brought to light by the happy approximation of the sovereign and her people.

It was a noble spectacle to behold a young Queen, at a time when scarce a monarch in Europe was secure on his throne, setting out with her illustrious consort and family to make a royal progress through her dominions, and selecting for the first place of her visit the island which had so recently raised the standard of rebellion against her government, and for the next the city which had first in the empire responded to the cry of treason raised in Paris, on the overthrow of the throne of Louis Philippe. Nor has the result failed to correspond, even more happily than could have been hoped, to the gallant undertaking. If it be true, as is commonly reported, that our gracious sovereign said, " She went to Ireland to *make* friends, but to the Land of Cakes to *find* them," she must by this time have been convinced that the generous design has, in both islands, proved successful beyond what her most enthusiastic friends could have dared to hope. Who could have recognised, in the multi-

tudes which thronged to witness her passage through Cork, Dublin, and Belfast, and the universal acclamations with which she was everywhere received by all classes of her subjects, the chief cities of an island torn by civil dissension, and which had only a year before broken out into actual rebellion against her government? Who could have recognised in the youthful sovereign visiting the public buildings of Dublin, like a private peeress, without any of the state of a sovereign, and chiefly interested with her royal consort in the institutions devoted to beneficence, the Head of a Government whom the Irish organ of rebellion, *The Nation*, had so long represented as callous to all the sufferings of the people? And during the magnificent spectacle of the royal progress through Glasgow, where five hundred thousand persons were assembled from that great city and the neighbouring counties to see their Queen—and she passed for three miles through stately structures, loaded with loyalty, under an almost continued archway of flags, amidst incessant and deafening cheers—who could have believed he was in a city in which democratic revolt had actually broken out only eighteen months before, and the walls had all been placarded, on the day when London was menaced, with treasonable proclamations, calling on the people to rise in their thousands and tens of thousands against the throne? And how blessed the contrast to the condition of Scotland when her *last Queen* had been in that neighbourhood, and the same towers of Glasgow Cathedral looked down on Morton issuing from the then diminutive burgh, to assail, in the immediate vicinity at Langside, the royal army headed by Mary, and drive her to exile, captivity, and death.*

We are not foolish enough to expect impossibilities from the Queen's visit—how splendid and gratifying soever its circumstances may have been. We know well how many and deep-rooted are the social evils which in both islands afflict society, and we are not so simple as to imagine that

* It is a curious coincidence, that the *first man* whom her Majesty met with and addressed, when she landed in Glasgow, was the *Earl of Morton*, the representative of the ruthless baron whose arms then proved so fatal to her beautiful and unfortunate ancestress. The first lady she shook hands with was Lady Belhaven, wife of Lord Belhaven, the descendant of the celebrated peer of the same name, who so vehemently opposed the union of Scotland and England. And, a few weeks before her Majesty's arrival in Glasgow, a stone erected by the Roman legions on the Wall of Antoninus, in the neighbourhood of that city, had been excavated, which bore an inscription beginning with the words "VICTRIX VICTORIA." It may still be seen in the court-yard of Glasgow College.

they will be removed by the sight of the Sovereign, as the innocent peasants believe that all physical diseases will be cured by the royal touch. We are well aware that the impression of even the most splendid pageants is often only transitory, and that sad realities sometimes return with accumulated force after they are over, from the contrast they present to imaginative vision. Still a step, and that too a most important one, has been taken in the right direction. If great, and in some respects lasting good has been done —if evils remain, as remain they ever will, in the present complicated condition of society, and the contending interests which agitate its bosom—one evil, and that the *greatest of all*, is lessened, and that is an estrangement between the People and their Sovereign. Crimes may return ; but the recurrence of the greatest of all, because it is the parent of all others—high treason—is for a time, to any extent at least, rendered impossible. The most sacred and important of all bonds, that which unites the sovereign and her subjects, has been materially strengthened. The most noble of all feelings, the disinterested affection of a people to their Queen, has been called into generous and heartstirring action. The "unbought loyalty of men, the cheap defence of nations," is *not* at an end. And if the effect of the Royal Visit were only that, in the greatest cities of her dominions, our gracious Sovereign, in an age unusually devoted to material influences, has succeeded, by the sweetness and grace of her manners, in causing the hearts of some hundred thousands of her subjects to throb with loyal devotion, and, for a time at least, supplanted the selfish by the generous emotions—the effect is not lost to the cause of order and the moral elevation of her people.

THE END.

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